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Mayor and City Council
City of Tucson
Tucson, AZ 85701

Greetings,

I was very disappointed that the Mayor and Council failed to adopt the Phase II report of City/County Water and Wastewater Infrastructure, Supply and Planning Study Oversight Committee at its January 12, 2010 joint meeting with the Pima County Board of Supervisors.

Over the last twenty-one months, I have attended about half of the Oversight Committee's meetings. Adopting this report does not require you to do anything, other than to move the study process forward as envisioned at the creation of this joint effort. In addition the motion to delay was a rebuke of the intensive and dedicated work of a number of citizens as well as city and county staffs.

I was especially dismayed at the statements that the report of Phase II was short on facts. This is disheartening because it shows a lack of understanding of the process. Phase I was an inventory of data about the water and wastewater systems. It was filled with technical information, facts about the systems as well as the regional context. Phase II was an inventory of policies and values - what is important to the citizens of the Tucson basin. The committee members debated at length the definition--and implications of that definition-- of a sustainable community. For me, a sustainable community is one that has a vibrant economy that is sustainable in the context of the natural resources that exist in the region and is ongoing for generations.

For instance, in the Tucson region, we know that sunshine is abundant and water is scarce. We know that we have a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural history that is very attractive to tourism. We know that we have a climate that attracts visitors in the winter when it is cold and snowy elsewhere. The Tucson Gem and Mineral Show is a perfect example of bringing people from all over the world to this locale and encouraging them to do business here. Our hotels, motels, and individual's houses are full of buyers, sellers, and admirers of the wonders of the world of gems and minerals. What other such events could be encouraged that would be so profitable for the community?

Providing sustainable supplies of water to the community, into the future, is a complex issue requiring the balancing of human and environmental needs. I hope you will not think of it as a tradeoff between the environment and humans, because the environment provides many services to the human population that are often not recognized - among them precipitation in its many forms. How our community grows and develops influences the cost of that development. Since the late 1970s, the cost of growth has been studied extensively with cost/benefit studies. It is not rocket science to know that running major water and wastewater pipelines (and roads) past vacant land is not using our capital in an efficient manner. Planning is necessary for efficient and smooth development that benefits the whole community at a price we can afford.

I want to emphasize that the oversight committee and staff went to extraordinary lengths to make the information presented and the deliberations open and transparent. There was an open call to the audience at the beginning of every meeting for people to present ideas. There was a time at the end for observers to comment on discussions that occurred during the meeting. The meetings were videotaped and available on the website. The technical reports were all available for everyone to download and read. Drafts of the final reports of Phase I and II were circulated at community meetings so that citizens could comment on them orally, in writing or postings on the website. The fact that some groups chose not to come and only present their ideas at the last minute should not invalidate the hundreds of

hours spent by those of us who followed and attended the meetings. There has been ample opportunity for people, groups, and ideas to be heard.

I urge you to applaud the hard work of your committee, the city and county staffs, and vote to approve the report and to move forward to the next phase. Don't let this amazing amount of work and effort die.

Sincerely,

Margot W. Garcia