

January 29, 2010

6381 W. Sweetwater Dr.
Tucson, AZ 85745

Mayor Bob Walkup
City Hall
255 W. Alameda St.
Tucson, AZ 85701

Dear Mayor Walkup:

I enthusiastically support acceptance of the Phase II report of the Tucsonpimawaterstudy group. As a research scientist specializing in biology (Ph.D., U of A, 1969) and citizen concerned about future water availability in the desert southwest, I have followed with great interest the work of this committee. I attended most meetings and when I missed some I caught up with the videos and reports on their most informative web site. Their process has been an outstanding example of transparency.

As I drove to the first Phase I meeting I attended in 2008, I was skeptical. There are many examples of human societies that failed owing to abuse of their resources and other problems. I wondered if members of the Tucsonpimawaterstudy group would be appointees with a hidden agenda or whether they would use a science-based approach of formulating significant questions, data collection and analysis, and objective review, to reach sound conclusions based on the best available evidence, not personal biases or lobbying pressures.

I was pleasantly surprised. This committee was a group of highly dedicated, hard-working, responsible, creative, concerned citizens, representing such diverse professions as science, engineering, and business. For 20 months they brought in a series of water and wastewater experts, reviewed extensive technical papers, and rigorously discussed the material. Their Phase II report and recommendations are based on objective evidence. I do not think that any other committee could do a better job, given their charge and schedule. As with any discovery process that is conducted properly, people can approach such studies with personal expectations and initial hypotheses, but in the end, a good approximation of the truth is discovered, whether or not the findings fit our preconceived or biased notions, and we should be prepared to adjust and move forward with the recommendations.

The process, as conducted by Dr. James Barry and staff, was the best example of democracy in action that I have ever seen. The public was invited to attend and participate in every meeting, the web site kept everybody fully informed, and at every meeting Dr. Barry aimed to hear all points of view and all data pertinent to the topics discussed, whether they agreed with his views or not. All of the material was digested by the committee, and their Phase II report is outstanding.

The following pertinent, science-backed points in the report are extremely important:

1. With climate change, there will be less water in the Colorado River than there has been in recent decades.

2. If *only* the currently-outlined obligated water service area of Tucson becomes fully developed in the future, sustaining water service will require more water than is available today.

3. Providing water by traditional pipe-and-pump methods *outside* the obligated area will intensify the problem of having insufficient water to go around (unless, perhaps, the obligated area is proportionally reduced). When supply becomes insufficient, somebody will lose out. We need to balance resource availability and use.

4. With the probable exception of rainwater and stormwater harvesting, new water supplies will be extremely expensive to develop – perhaps so much so as to be unaffordable for a large part of our population.

You have the opportunity to accept the Phase II report and move forward with implementation. Alternatively, you could reject it, but I seriously doubt that you could find a better committee and more realistic recommendations. Furthermore, if we delay implementation of some of the items in the report for 15 years or so and allow uncontrolled piping and pumping of Tucson's water hither and yon, southern Arizona will be running out of water, and significant cut-backs in service for some users will result. In the future, Tucson could become known as another example of a city that collapsed, or it could be seen as an outstanding example of appropriate planning with vision.

Sincerely,

Charles J. Cole

cc:

Councilman Fimbres

Councilman Glassman

Councilman Kozachik

Councilwoman Romero

Councilwoman Scott

Councilwoman Uhlich

Chairman Ramon Valadez, Pima County Board of Supervisors