



Mayor Walkup and Council members
City of Tucson
P.O. Box 27210
Tucson, AZ 85726

RE: City/County Water and Wastewater Study Phase II Report

Dear Mayor Walkup and City Council Members:

Sky Island Alliance urges you to support the City/County Water and Wastewater Study Phase II Report and direct City staff to proceed, in cooperation with Pima County and other participants, with implementation of the recommendations contained within the report.

Sky Island Alliance is a grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the rich natural heritage of native species and habitats in the Sky Island region of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. We work with volunteers, scientists, land owners, public officials, and government agencies to establish protected areas, restore healthy landscapes, and promote public appreciation of the region's unique biological diversity.

We appreciate the public process undertaken during the development of this report. The recommendations before you are the result of close to two years of research, study, analysis and public deliberations, which the community has watched and participated in. In addition Sky Island Alliance has been involved in riparian restoration activities throughout the county and has developed expertise that we shared with study committee.

Because of our long-standing commitment to riparian protection and restoration, we were dismayed to learn of the recent effort by the homebuilding community requesting that the City reject the use of effluent for environmental purposes. In addition, the homebuilding and development interests are asking the City not to enter into an agreement that was already signed by the City and the County (Mayor Walkup and Chairwoman Bronson, respectively) in February 2000. This outlined a wide range of agreed-upon issues surrounding effluent, including a commitment to reserve a specific amount of effluent for riparian projects benefiting the entire community. This reserve is known as the Conservation Effluent Pool (CEP).

Sky Island Alliance supports the recommendations made regarding riparian habitat, groundwater dependent ecosystems, and the perpetuation of the CEP. The goals and recommendations outlined on pages 29-36 of the report clearly outline a path forward for all participants to prudently and thoughtfully utilize our water supply to protect and encourage riparian habitat and groundwater dependent ecosystems.

The CEP is an essential tool needed to achieve these goals and we encourage the Mayor and Council to direct staff to continue to work on detailing how the CEP will be managed and utilized. This increased specificity will lead to improved management of the CEP, benefiting both the owners of this resource and the riparian habitat that depends on it.

Thank you for considering our input on this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melanie Emerson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Melanie Emerson
Executive Director

Cc: Ward 1 Council Member Regina Romero
Ward 2 Vice Mayor Rodney Glassman
Ward 3 Council Member Karin Uhlich
Ward 4 Council Member Shirley Scott
Ward 5 Council Member Richard Fimbres
Ward 6 Council Member Steve Kozachik
Mike Letcher, Tucson City Manager
Ramón Valadez, Chairman, Pima County Board of Supervisors