

Tucson Mountains
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SINCE 1934

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January 25, 2010

Mayor Bob Walkup
City of Tucson
City Hall
255 West Alameda Street
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Dear Mayor Walkup:

The Tucson Mountains Association is the neighborhood association of record for a large area spanning portions of the City of Tucson, unincorporated Pima County, and Marana. It includes the area bounded on the north by Twin Peaks Road, on the east by Silverbell Road, on the south by the 22nd Street Alignment/Starr Pass Boulevard, and on the west by Saguaro National Park and Tucson Mountain Park. TMA has, as its mission, on the one hand, protection of the health and well-being of those who reside within our territory; and, on the other, protection of natural habitat, to preserve the biological diversity in the Tucson Mountains and their foothills. These two sides of our mission can be on a collision course with one another, unless we can find a sustainable balance between density of development and available resources. We submit that the health and well-being of the entire population of the Tucson region also depends upon this balance. We commend the City of Tucson and Pima County for recognizing this need and attempting to address it. As such, we are necessarily concerned with water policy, and its effects upon all current and future residents and the environment.

The Joint Water & Wastewater Committee Phase 2 report contributes to improved water resources planning for the Tucson metropolitan area. We compliment the Joint Committee for an excellent professional response to the scope you established for their deliberations. Joint Committee members gave a tremendous amount of time and energy, selfless and without much reward. They genuinely studied massive amounts of information. The Technical Papers, all available to the public on the website, abundantly support the conclusions and recommendations in the report. The County and City staff also worked collaboratively and made substantial contributions. The results will impact future water deliberations and policies. We have two observations as you complete your deliberations and decide on approval of the final report: 1) acknowledging a balance is necessary as we address various needs for water, and 2) supporting the need for a permanent water policy. Our comments related to each of these topics include:

❖ **Balanced Requirements**—We applaud the Committee's recommended adoption of a new paradigm that provides a balance across all requirements for water—people, economics, and environment. This is especially important in light of the limited supply of water we will face in the future.

Recognizing these limitations, water conservation is consistent with a recent U.S. Geological Survey that documents decreasing water use in the West (with the exception of four states), intense disputes, and ecosystem collapse tied to dwindling supplies. There are different techniques that will aid conservation measures, including rainwater harvesting focusing on roof and paved areas (both residential and commercial), maximum use of gray water for residential and commercial applications, and restoration of selective wetlands or washes with native plantings. Open space acquisition will further address the preservation of important conservation areas designated in the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan.

❖ **Permanent Water Policy**—The City of Tucson has an interim water policy that was developed by Regina Romero and endorsed by the Council. Both the Council and Pima County need to adopt permanent water policies. We believe the Committee’s Phase 2 Report, especially with regard to Goal 2 (Direct Growth to Suitable Areas) and Goal 3 (Integrate Land Use Planning and Water Resources Planning), provides a sound framework to consider the key elements for a water policy.

At the public hearing on January 11, some expressed concern with the “broad philosophical statements” and potential cost implications of the Phase 2 Report. A careful reading of the Technical Papers indicates that the recommendations of the Committee are fully supported by scientific and technical data presented by staff. Thank you for your consideration of our suggestions as you shape the future of the Tucson area through water resources planning. We strongly urge you to adopt the Phase 2 Final Report as the guidepost for the future.

Sincerely,

Dr. Edwin A. Verburg
President
Tucson Mountains Association

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
Ramón Valadez, Chairman, Pima County Board of Supervisors

