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Honorable Mayor and Council Members
City of Tucson
P.O. Box 27210
Tucson, Arizona 85726

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

As one of many community members who over two years attended meetings of the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure, Supply and Planning Study Oversight Committee, and read many of the Committee's guiding water documents, I'm writing to you about the proposed Refinements to the Water Service Area.

At center of the Committee's Phase II Final Report – the spirit of the report – is an attempt to shift dialogue about how water is used in our area of the state, away from engineered solutions, where sources of water are secured to provide for human needs without fully understanding the costs to society and nature, towards a new water paradigm. This paradigm, known internationally by varying terms – holistic water management, and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), among others – requires that the full social, economic and environmental costs and benefits of altering any aquatic system be measured *before* change takes place. Also, that there be open, transparent dialogue about the costs and benefits of prospective alterations.

In a time of climate change, when the Colorado River, one of our main sources of water, is showing notable and documented signs of stress, I feel it's unwise to set into place (and without time for adequate study, and transparent feedback from experts and the public) the precedent of extending service without fully understanding how the river's shifting condition could alter its ability to serve as our provider. There are parallels here to our unhealthy economy: before buying, we need to know what we can afford.

If the precedent to continue adding adjacent areas that are dependent on a river showing signs of stress is cemented, without comprehensive integrated land and water planning in our region (and most likely at the state level), we will remain distant from one of the main tenets of IWRM: educating the public, with honesty, about the fact that we live in

new times. In these times, significant uncertainty about our water supplies is the context in which business, citizens, industry and civilization will necessarily exist. (See McKinsey & Company, *Charting Our Water Future: Economic Frameworks to Inform Decision-Making*.) Perhaps above all in these times, it's critical that the public come to understand that these *are* new times, requiring a fundamental re-imagining of our shared life as a desert community.

Instead of moving forward, therefore, to extend Tucson Water's service area, with little time for thorough analysis, and when there's considerable doubt about our water sources in a time of climate change, it's vital that hard-to-ask questions about the Colorado's ability to continue providing be asked openly. Questions also need to be asked about any proposed new supplies for our area, including importing water from distant aquifers, re-used water, cloud seeding, desalination, and others. Taking needed time to openly ask and analyze these questions would set an important precedent, and would honor and be a continuation of the example of careful labor and transparency of the Committee, instead of a departure from it.

Perhaps the venue and vehicle for asking these questions and for a more thorough, transparent conversation about extending service areas might be PAG, as it prepares to follow up with the Phase II Report. Questions about the health of the Colorado and the feasibility of and appropriate methodology for extending service could be incorporated into this process, together with other critical conversations, such as the role of rainwater harvesting and other conservation measures. Waiting until the PAG process is set into place in the next month or so would leave room for adequate feedback from experts and the public, and decision-making informed by sound science and best-practices in IWRM.

It can, of course, be costly to put on hold the development of new industries and neighborhoods that are waiting for the approval of this extended area of service, but in the long run, it's costlier to set into place a fragile system, dependent on water that may bring with it major challenges for future generations. Another real cost of extending service without measured consideration is the growing public confusion that exists as the Southwest continues to make headlines for being one of the planet's most vulnerable sites, while our water policies de facto give the impression we can basically continue as we have: providing water to new areas little by little, without connecting the dots.

I thank you for whatever consideration you might give to these concerns.

Sincerely,

Madeline Kiser
Member, Sustainable Tucson