



# Tucson Regional Water Coalition

*Prosperity - Sustainability - Community*

October 8, 2010

Alliance of Construction  
Trades

Arizona Builders Alliance

Arizona Multi-Housing  
Association

Arizona Small Business  
Association

Marana Chamber of  
Commerce

Metropolitan Pima Alliance

Northern Pima County  
Chamber of Commerce

Safe and Sensible Water  
Committee

Smart United Business  
Strategies

Southern Arizona Home  
Builders Association

Southern Arizona  
Leadership Council

Tucson Association of  
Realtors

Tucson Hispanic  
Chamber of Commerce

Tucson Metropolitan  
Chamber of Commerce

Tucson Utility  
Contractors Association

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255 W. Alameda  
Tucson, Arizona 85701

Dear City/County Water and Wastewater Study:

The Tucson Regional Water Coalition (TRWC) is a group of business and trade organizations collectively representing over 250,000 jobs in the Tucson region. The member organizations recognize the importance of water to our local and statewide economy, and have organized to engage policymakers on critical water management issues. In that regard, TRWC has reviewed the draft Action Plan for Water Sustainability. TRWC continues to evaluate all water policy against our Principles of Sustainable Water Resource Management, which we originally submitted as part of the Phase I Study (See Attached).

The TRWC is encouraged to find elements of the Principles in the draft Action Plan. We are equally encouraged to hear of City/County staff's willingness to continue working with TRWC to draft and implement policy that underscores the important role water management plays in regional economic prosperity. Based on conversations with City/County staff, TRWC has started drafting an additional section of the Action Plan that focuses specifically on water management objectives affecting job creation and long-term economic prosperity.

TRWC has always focused on what we define as the pillars of sound water management: 1) cooperative use of excess capacity in existing regional infrastructure; 2) addressing regional infrastructure deficits with regional funding mechanisms; 3) maximum use of existing water entitlements; 4) cooperatively work to acquire additional water entitlements for the region; 5) evaluate conservation measures as an alternative to supply acquisition; and 6) fully-integrate economic and financial analysis into water policy decision-making.

The TRWC believes that while the Action Plan contains elements of the above-mentioned concepts, it fails to appropriately group and identify these as fundamental to sound water management and regional economic prosperity. TRWC believes it is necessary to break these focus areas out into the proposed Economic Prosperity section of the Action Plan that we have agreed to help draft with City/County staff and perhaps TREO. We believe the current draft Action Plan is incomplete without the proposed section and that reorganization of certain concepts will ensure that the above listed pillars jointly supporting sound water management and economic development receive due attention.

City/County Water & Wastewater Study  
October 8, 2010  
Page 2 of 2

Finally, the Phase II Report and Action Plan provide a good, consolidated water policy platform to guide City and County staff on a number of water-related issues. However, TRWC believes these reports largely restate existing policy. Additionally, we believe that in an attempt to create an exhaustive list of water-related policy objectives, the Action Plan (and Phase II Report) lacks a clear focus on the fundamentals stated above. TRWC, and we believe the community at large, is hungry for new and creative ways to move the region forward. We are hopeful that the upcoming Regional Water Assessment will focus on ways to move the region beyond jurisdictional interests and develop a strong vision for how to manage water resources at the regional level.

Sincerely,

Tucson Regional Water Coalition

## **Principles of Sustainable Water Resource Management**

### **Promote Comprehensive Inclusiveness and Transparency.**

- Water management must be based on a participatory approach, involving a balance of technical expertise and expression of community values with an emphasis on consensus building between those representing current and future users, planners, and policy-makers at all levels within the region.

### **Acknowledge that Sound Water Resource Management Knows No Jurisdictional Boundaries.**

- All water providers, users, and uses in the metropolitan area are connected by reliance on regional groundwater supplies to meet annual demand and provide a buffer against drought. Water planning should be conducted at the basin scale (defined as the Tucson AMA) and should involve all users.
- Support shared use of community infrastructure through cost-effective wheeling agreements for delivery of effluent, surface water, imported groundwater, and/or stored renewable supplies to achieve greater integration, reliability, flexibility and reliance on renewable supplies throughout the region.
- Collectively maximize purchase and underground storage of additional surface water and/or imported groundwater supplies, augmenting local groundwater supplies to further insulate the region from cyclical weather patterns.
- All local water supplies—groundwater, CAP, other surface water, and effluent—should be cooperatively used for the maximum economic, social, and environmental net benefit of the region expressed in monetized or quantifiable terms.
- All work products and policies of a local water planning process must be consistent with applicable state laws and policies. In circumstances where local conditions or values conflict with state law and/or policy, the process should seek the appropriate amendments at the state-level.

### **Recognize Water as an Economic Good with Value to all Competing Uses**

- Price signals are an important tool for achieving efficient allocation of water resources. Current retail water rates do not match claims of scarcity and conflict with cultural messages urging conservation.
- Promote policies that facilitate allocation or reallocation of water resources to highest value uses that yield the greatest economic, social, and environmental net benefit for the region expressed in monetized or quantifiable terms.
- Commit to understanding the fundamental relationship between water resources and regional economic development in the form of job retention and creation, and the general prosperity of citizens.

### **Use Economic Analysis to Evaluate Alternatives & Risk**

- Promote non-discriminatory methods, evaluating alternatives objectively and comparing net benefits in monetized or quantifiable terms.
- Promote community-wide conservation goals and standards that maximize acre-feet saved per community dollar spent, focusing policies and finite economic resources on uses/users with the greatest conservation potential.

- Evaluate proven conservation measures as an alternative to supply acquisition, justifying investment decisions on alternatives that yield the greatest economic, social, and environmental net benefit for the region expressed in monetized or quantifiable terms.
- Concerns regarding evolving and/or uncertain conditions should be addressed through iterative risk assessments and decision-making processes, systematically reevaluating risk according to potential financial impact to the region and probability of occurrence.

### **Create Long-Range Financial Plans and Funding Mechanisms**

- A Sustainable Water Resource Management Plan for the region is incomplete without a Budget and Implementation Strategy (Fiscal and Physical). The region must move away from the “plan and pay as we go” approach and develop flexible long-range plans and funding mechanisms to avoid the potential for future crisis management situations.