



Opposition to Hualapai Basin INA Designation Process

1 message

Laura Steele

Mon, Sep 26, 2022 at 10:30 AM

Reply-To: [REDACTED]

To: Docket Supervisor Sharon Scantlebury <sscantlebury@azwater.gov>

Dear Docket Supervisor Scantlebury,

As an agricultural producer in Mohave County, I write urging the Department not to initiate procedures to designate the Hualapai Valley Groundwater basin as a subsequent INA.

Under Arizona law, a subsequent INA is appropriate only when there is insufficient groundwater to support irrigated agriculture at current rates of withdrawal. Thanks to the innovative farming methods and state-of-the-art technology employed by farms in the Hualapai Basin, agriculture is not at risk of depleting its water supply to a dangerous level. In fact, many farmers are reporting that well levels have remained static or have increased since they were drilled. The Department's preliminary data showed that if current rates of pumping continue, only 17 percent of agricultural wells will be at a depth-to-water ratio of 750 feet. Both anecdotal and modeling-based data indicate that irrigated agriculture is not at risk of having insufficient groundwater to support it. Therefore, an INA is not warranted, and the Department should not spend its limited time and resources initiating the INA process.

While it is true that agriculture uses a significant amount of groundwater, water use is not water waste. Farming and ranching are significant economic drivers in my community. Large farms in the valley employ dozens of people directly, but also support hundreds more jobs through related industries including trucking, hospitality, sales, and engineering. Farmers and ranchers are engaged citizens who give back to their community by supporting youth programs and charitable organizations. Given the economic powerhouse and community driver that is Mohave County agriculture, I cannot understand why our elected officials seem intent on crippling our industry by limiting its access to water. The data does not support INA regulation, and we urge the Department not to engage in this process any further.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

Laura Steele

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Golden Valley, AZ 86413
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