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Phone: 480-312-5685
ScottsdaleAZ.gov/Water

December 9, 2022

Sharon Scantlebury

The Arizona Department of Water Resources
1110 West Washington, Suite 310
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Via email to sscantlebury@azwater.gov

Draft substantive policy statement addressing the drought volume exemption

Dear Ms. Scantlebury,

Scottsdale Water would like to thank the Department for continuing to uphold the importance of responsible groundwater use and the continued vigilance in accessing long term viability in the face of a future with less Colorado River supplies. With the acute crisis on the Colorado River and the high likelihood of additional surface water cuts in the new future, discussing Drought Volume Exemptions (DVE) and clearly delineating parameters is crucial to our long-term sustainability.

The approach, as outlined, is reasonable for what would be expected as a water provider requesting the DVE for when a provider's surface water supply is significantly reduced. However, there are a few concerns regarding equity and clarification that we believe should be addressed

- Drought Management (or Preparedness) Plans and a provider's associated Stage triggers inside those plans vary wildly across providers. Instead of using the term "late-stage", Scottsdale Water recommends that DVE applicants include a timeline of stages declared, the reasoning behind the triggering and responses taken at each tier. This will provide the Department with a better understanding of the full breadth of measures taken outside of simply declaring a late-stage shortage. Voluntary or mandated efforts should be taken into consideration. It would be a major milestone to subject customers to a mandated trigger and this will also vary from provider to provider.
- In the same vein, all providers, both private and public, should be held to the same standards of demand reduction measures. While not all tools are available for each party, all groundwater is equally valuable, and with the explosion of technology in the water conservation sector there are many avenues to promote reduction.



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- In the event of a severe Colorado River Shortage, It is likely that the water available for storage previously will no longer be an option for the future, making the groundwater resources we currently have effectively irreplaceable. While stored groundwater was traditionally viewed as a bank account, the more salient analogy may be as a life insurance policy – an option only cashed out in times of the drastic need. While Scottsdale Water recognizes that we may be applying and pumping, it also does not escape us that the cascade effect of large-scale pumping can also be dangerous. We echo AMWUA’s comments on LTSC Alternative Supply.
- Finally, Scottsdale Water requests the Department evaluate and better define beneficial use. A breakdown of beneficial uses for different types of water will also be helpful in preparation for further cuts. Traditionally, effluent was beneficially used outdoors, particularly in landscapes, and is incentivized in the management plans. With the new direct potable reuse permit a new avenue was created for a higher-level use. However, with the way current DVE requirements are written, providers may shy away from this investment if it means jeopardizing their current indirect potable reuse programs. We hope the department considers this as the address stakeholder comments and move towards a final policy decision.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment to this policy. Please don’t hesitate to reach out with any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Baumgardner", is written over a horizontal line.

Gretchen A. Baumgardner

Water Policy Manager | City of Scottsdale