November 1, 2017

John Kmiec, Director of Water
Marana Water
5100 West Ina Road
Marana, AZ 85743

Dear Mr. Kmiec,

I want to thank you and the Recycled Water Committee for your time, efforts and careful consideration of actions to enhance the use of recycled water in Arizona.

As Chair of the Governor’s Water Augmentation Council (GWAC), I approve the Committee’s request to support the removal of the 2025 sunset of long term store credit accrual for effluent. I suggest that the Committee draft a letter to the Chairman of the Governor’s Water Solutions Conversation (Governor’s Conversation), Kirk Adams, supporting the elimination of the sunset provision. The letter should come from the Committee and note that the entire GWAC has not yet considered this option, but the Committee understands this item may be up for consideration in the Governor’s Conversation process before the entire GWAC can act. The GWAC could consider the issue and take action, if that item makes it into a 2018 legislative package emanating from the Governor’s Conversation process.

In response to the Recycled Water Committee’s second recommendation, I do not believe that this is the appropriate time to move forward with changes to the “cut to the aquifer” standard for effluent delivered to managed recharge facilities. The issue needs a more in-depth discussion with the entire GWAC. I am supportive of a recommendation to move the issue to the GWAC for that discussion.

Sincerely,

Thomas Buschatzke
Director

cc: Gerry Walker
    Martin Stiles
Governor’s Water Augmentation Council  
Recycled Water Committee  

October 23, 2017  

To: Thomas Buschatzke, Director and Chairman  
1110 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007  

From: John Kmiec, Committee Chair, Recycled Water Committee  

Subject: Request for Recommendations Approval  

Dear Chairman Buschatzke,  

In October, 2016, the Governor’s Water Augmentation Council formed a committee to research further water supply opportunities from reclaimed water. The Recycled Water Committee has met five times and has developed two recommendations for your consideration. With your approval, the committee would like for these recommendations to be adopted by the GWAC.  

The first recommendation concerns the 2025 sunset of long term storage credit accrual:  

Resolution RWC 2017-001 In order to ensure the proper stewardship of Arizona’s water management and the economic vitality of state, the RWC moves to the GWAC for consideration and recommended approval for the elimination of the year 2025 sunset of long term storage credit accrual derived from effluent.  

Looking to the future of the State, we see great benefit to the “One Water” concept which states that all water has value. With respect to effluent in a managed recharge facility, those projects can provide value to many stakeholders of the state, not just the resource value to the effluent entitlement holder. Returning waters to their natural setting within the state through a managed recharge facility provides not only benefits to the entitlement holder, but the community at large. Many of these projects provide societal benefits of recreation and environmental benefits of habitat restoration or augmentation. Disincentives for effluent managed recharge facilities are in conflict with what many communities want or desire.  

Several experts have discussed these concepts with the committee and have noted potential for the expansion of managed recharge facilities in the State. For example, Joe Olsen, General Manager of Metro Water District, and Tim Thomure, Director of Tucson Water, have discussed the importance of recharging recycled water to enhance Arizona aquifers. They believe that incentivizing effluent recharge through greater long-term
storage credit accounting will lead to environmental and economic benefits. One case study is the Santa Cruz River Heritage Project in southern Arizona. This is a future managed recharge facility that would use reclaimed water to increase flows through a riparian habitat with a potential for future economic development.

Mr. Thomure also pointed out several concerns with the current accounting system for effluent in managed recharge facilities. Managed facilities can be just as effective as constructed, but a 50% cut for the aquifer forces water managers into engineered projects. Constructed facilities cost more and are a barrier to conjunctive uses (Thomure, 2017).

A second example of expert-level input has been brought to the committee by AMWUA Director, Warren Tenney. In a May 2017 white paper, AMWUA and Mr. Tenney came out in support of reevaluating the long-term storage credit accounting for effluent recharge in managed facilities (AMWUA, 2017). The paper states that the current system “may drive certain water users to take reclaimed water out of some of Arizona’s rivers that rely on the water flow.”

Additional presentations were made by John Munderloh (Prescott Valley) and Lawrence Marquez of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation who documented that constructed in-channel recharge facilities were cost prohibitive, labor intensive, and did not yield significantly greater recharge than managed recharge facilities.

For the Recycled Water Committee’s second recommendation, we propose the following language:

Resolution RWC 2017-002 In order for the state to continue to lead on water resource policy management and to recognize that all water has value, the RWC moves to the GWAC for consideration and recommended approval that the "cut to the aquifer" for effluent delivered from managed recharge facilities be established as zero percent for annual storage and recovery and 5% for long term storage credit accrual.

We believe that these changes will be helpful for both securing and effectively utilizing our water resources now and in the future. We ask for your support in bringing these items before the discretion of the Council.

References

1) Thomure, Tim, 2017. As presented to the GWAC Reuse Committee on March 29, 2017.