



Arizona Assured and Adequate Water Supply Programs

Office of Assured and Adequate Water Supply

Carlane Stephan
Arizona Department of
Water Resources
3550 N. Central Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 771-8585
wrecs@azwater.gov

www.azwater.gov

ADWR's Assured and Adequate Water Supply Programs were created to address the problem of limited groundwater supplies in Arizona:

- The **Assured Water Supply Program** functions to protect and preserve limited groundwater supplies within Arizona's five Active Management Areas (AMAs). AMAs are those areas of the state where significant groundwater depletion has occurred and include portions of Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Santa Cruz and Yavapai County.
- Outside the AMAs, the **Adequate Water Supply Program**, while not as restrictive as the Assured Water Supply Program, acts as a consumer advisory program, ensuring that potential real estate buyers are informed about any water supply limitations.



Applicability

The Assured and Adequate Water Supply Programs apply when a subdivision is being developed, and thus are driven by the definition of a subdivision from the Arizona Department of Real Estate:

A subdivision is six or more parcels with at least one parcel having an area less than 36 acres. This includes residential or commercial subdivisions, stock cooperatives, condominiums, and all lands subdivided as part of a common promotional plan (including golf courses, parks, schools, and other amenities). Short-term leases (12 months or less) and subdivisions where all parcels are greater than 36 acres in size do not fall under this definition.



USDA-NRCS



USDA-NRCS



USDA-NRCS

Both the Assured and Adequate Water Supply Programs are based on demonstration of a 100-year water supply considering current and committed demand, as well as growth projections.

Demonstration of Assured or Adequate Water Supplies

ADWR's Assured Water Supply program operates within Arizona's five Active Management Areas. It is designed to sustain the state's economic health by preserving groundwater resources and promoting long-term water supply planning. Before recording plats or selling parcels, developers must demonstrate **all of the criteria in the table to the right**. The Arizona Department of Real Estate will not issue a public report, which allows the developer to sell lots, without a demonstration of an assured water supply.

ADWR's Adequate Water Supply Program operates outside the Active Management Areas and was enacted in response to the marketing of lots without available water supplies. Only **the first five criteria** to the right must be demonstrated to obtain a Designation of Adequate Water Supply. State statute requires subdivision developers to obtain a determination from ADWR regarding water supply availability before marketing lots. Inadequacy of supply must be disclosed to potential buyers.

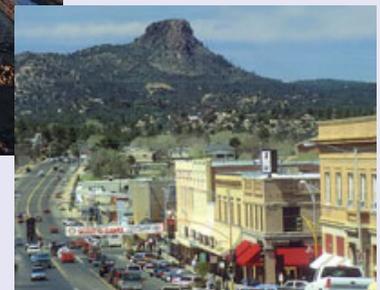
As an alternative to the developer demonstrating an Assured or Adequate Water Supply, the water provider may instead secure a Designation of Assured or Adequate Water Supply for the entire service area. The developer is then only required to obtain a written commitment of service from the provider. The most populous cities within most AMAs have obtained a Designation of Assured Water Supply, thereby qualifying most new subdivisions without need for separate studies.

Criteria	Description
Physical water availability	Physical availability of the water supply is typically demonstrated through a hydrologic study. For groundwater, the study must consider demands of area users for a 100-year period, and projected water levels may not exceed depth limitations specified in the rules.
Legal water availability	Legal rights to the water must exist
Continuous water availability	Water providers or developers must demonstrate that the water supply is uninterrupted for the 100-year period, or that sufficient backup supplies exist for any anticipated shortages.
Financial capability	Water providers or developers must demonstrate financial capability to construct the water delivery system and any storage or treatment facilities. Financial capability for developers is typically considered through the local government's subdivision review process.
Water quality	Proposed sources of water must satisfy existing state water quality standards and any other quality standards applicable to the proposed use after treatment.
Consistency with the management goal	Developers or water providers must demonstrate that renewable water supplies will be available.
Consistency with the management plan	Each AMA's Groundwater Management Plan prescribes water conservation requirements for municipal water providers. Water demand associated with proposed subdivisions is evaluated in accordance with these conservation requirements.

Active Management Area Goals

Arizona's 1980 Groundwater Code established management goals for each AMA. The Assured Water Supply Program is a key tool designed to assist in the achievement of these goals.

Active Management Area	Goal
Phoenix, Tucson, Prescott	Attain safe-yield by the year 2025
Pinal	Preserve existing agricultural economies for as long as feasible, while preserving future water supplies for non-irrigation uses
Santa Cruz	Maintain a safe-yield condition and prevent long-term local water table declines



"Safe-yield" is the long-term balancing of groundwater withdrawals with the amount of water naturally and artificially recharged to Active Management Area aquifers.