



**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of WATER RESOURCES**  
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Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2105  
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May 29, 2015

**NOTICE OF EXTENSION OF PUBLIC HEARING PERIOD**  
**PROPOSED IRRIGATION NON-EXPANSION AREA: SAN SIMON VALLEY SUB-BASIN**

The Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources (“Department”) hereby provides notice that the public comment period regarding the proposed designation of an irrigation non-expansion area (“INA”) within the San Simon Valley sub-basin of the Safford groundwater basin is extended, until Friday, July 17, 2015, so that the Department may present and the public may provide comment on: (1) finalized water level data for the San Simon Valley sub-basin, and (2) a numerical groundwater model for the San Simon Valley sub-basin.

**1. Finalized Well Data**

The Department held a public hearing in Bowie, AZ, on May 16, 2015. At that hearing, the Department presented groundwater level change data then in its possession. That data was derived in part from the Department’s recent sub-basin-wide water level data collection effort. More specifically, during February and March of 2015, Department field personnel measured the depth-to-water in several hundred wells in the San Simon Valley Sub-Basin. Normally, water level data collected by the Department undergo preliminary internal review and quality assurance before being classified as final data. However, the Department was unable to fully complete its internal review and quality assurance processes prior to the May 16 hearing. The Department therefore presented the data as “Preliminary Data Subject to Revision.” In fact, measurements for only a very small number of wells required additional verification when the preliminary data were presented. The Department believed, and still believes, that the data were in sufficiently final form as of the time of the May 16 hearing for the purpose of reliably identifying large-scale, groundwater level change trends within the San Simon Valley sub-basin.

Nevertheless, more than one individual objected to the Department’s use of data which the Department had characterized as “preliminary,” and one commenter requested that the Department continue the May 16 hearing so that finalized well data could be presented to the public. The Department has since completed its internal review and quality assurance processes and, therefore, in light of the request for finalized well data, will make its finalized data available on its website at <http://www.azwater.gov/azdwr/SanSimonValley.htm> on Tuesday, June 2, 2015. The Department will also provide updated statistical calculations of groundwater change levels within the sub-basin using this finalized data. Individuals who are unable to access the data via the Internet may request to receive it in hard copy by contacting Michelle Moreno at 602-771-8530.

## **2. Groundwater Model**

Since receiving the Petition to designate the San Simon Valley Sub-basin as in INA, the Department has been working to develop a numerical groundwater model in order to calculate groundwater level changes and groundwater flow behavior in the sub-basin in response to 100 years of future pumping at current rates of withdrawal. The Department's model was not complete at the time of the May 16 hearing and therefore was not presented at that time. However, the model will soon be completed and capable of making reliable projections of groundwater level changes. While applicable statute does not require the creation of a numerical model for use in the Director's decision on a proposed INA, in the present case, the Department believes that a numerical model is useful in assessing whether there is insufficient groundwater to provide a reasonably safe supply for irrigation of the cultivated lands in the area at current rates of withdrawal. For that reason, the Director intends to use the model in making his decision on the proposed INA when the model is completed. The Department therefore feels it is appropriate to present its model to the public and to accept public comment on the model and its projections before the Director makes a decision with respect to the proposed INA. The Department will make its groundwater model, along with a technical memorandum describing the model, available to the public on its website at <http://www.azwater.gov/azdwr/SanSimonValley.htm> on Wednesday, June 17, 2015. Individuals who are unable to access the model via the Internet may contact Michelle Moreno at 602-771-8530 to request an electronic copy of the model and/or a hard copy of the Department's technical memorandum.

### **EXTENDED COMMENT PERIOD**

So that the public has an opportunity to review and comment on the new information described above, the Department will extend the deadline to submit written comments for or against the designation of the San Simon Valley Sub-basin as an INA until Friday, July 17, 2015. Written comments may be submitted by mail postmarked no later than July 17, 2015, or via email, fax, or hand delivery until 5:00 P.M. on July 17, 2015, to:

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The Director shall make findings and issue an order either designating or declining to designate the San Simon Valley Sub-basin as an INA within 30 days after the close of the comment period and shall publish the findings and order once each week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in Cochise and Graham Counties. The Director's findings and order will also be made available on the Department's website.