

May 12, 2015

To: Arizona Department of Water Resources
San Simon/Bowie Sub Basin

From: Calvin Allred
108 East Fan RD
Bowie, AZ 85605



My family and I moved to Willcox in 1978 and my wife and I have lived there ever since. I currently have four sons living in Bowie, all involved in farming. My brother Jerry and I own approximately 450 acres of Pecans and 80 acres of Pistachios in the Bowie area and together with another brother we purchased 280 acres of Pecans in the San Simon area.

We purchased most of the Bowie farm in 2004. At that time there were approximately 340 acres of trees that had been planted in the late 1970's. We planted the rest of the trees since then. The farms we purchased in Bowie consisted of a total of 1250 acres of farmland that had been farmed at sometime. There are five old wells on these farms and we have drilled one new well. We are currently farming a total of approximately 530 acres of nut trees which leaves approximately 720 acres fallow. We contemplated drilling more wells and planting more trees on some of the fallow ground but decided that this would be foolish given the water situation. We did not want to pump more water given the history of the water (aquifer) in this area. The water table was going down but not as fast as in previous years when more acres were being farmed. Our neighbors at that time felt the same way and made similar decisions.

Things began to change a few years ago when investor groups began to buy farmland for nut trees in the Bowie and San Simon areas. In Bowie those of us who had tried to protect the aquifer became very concerned and looked into the options available to protect the aquifer and avoid having the water table decline even more rapidly. We looked at the possibility of an INA at that time. In the end we all met together with the investor groups that were currently developing farmland and came to a handshake agreement. The investor groups would change their practice of planting all the acreage available and drill as many new wells as needed and instead they agreed to only plant a percentage of the available land. At this point we were still dealing primarily with previously farmed lands. We all agreed that it would be foolish to plant every available acre. This slowed things down temporarily but there were already too many acres planted.

Recently new investor groups have become interested in this area. Some have already purchased land. They have indicated that they will plant every available acre and some have even cleared desert ground that has never been farmed. They have no interest in any cooperative arrangement to limit in any way the use of water. In the San Simon area there are hundreds of acres that have been cleared. New wells are being drilled, acres are being planted or in the planning stage and the pressure from California growers is intense. Many of them are looking for land outside of California that can be used for nut trees due to the drought and water problems they face. They are here looking for land and they are willing to pay prices that a few years ago were unheard of. All of this has created the "perfect storm" with regard to the aquifer problem in this basin.

With the new trees currently planted the water needs as they mature, will about double from where we are today. If the plantings that are planned on property that has already been purchased actually get planted we will be pumping much more water than we currently use.

We know that the water table is dropping and we know that back in the 1960's and 70's when

farming was going strong in this area it was dropping at what many described as an “alarming rate”.

I regret that there are some who don't seem to be concerned about the aquifer. They seem to think that there is an unlimited supply of water and therefore they can farm every acre and more.

There are others who own lands that a few years ago they could sell for a few hundred dollars an acre that now they may be able to sell for a few thousand dollars an acre. They don't care about the aquifer, they want to sell land and walk away with their money. There are a few others who will be hurt by the INA unfairly and this is unfortunate.

If there was an unlimited supply of water in this basin we could satisfy everyone and we would all be happy, but there is not.

Water is being controlled and protected all around us. Both ground water and surface water is subject to controls in New Mexico, most of Arizona and in every other state of the west. In almost every irrigated farming area in the west there are some acres that have rights to water and some that don't.

It is important for the future of the communities, schools and other businesses that we protect the aquifer. Kicking the can down the road will only make it more difficult and costly. There may be a need to reduce the acres being farmed as it is but if we let more acres go in it will only compound the problems and costs to those involved. Planting nuts is costly and therefore taking them out will create significant financial impact. Doing this now will be far less painful than waiting and facing bigger challenges later.

The State of Arizona has given us two methods to protect aquifers, the AMA and the INA. There are, therefore, only three choices: do nothing, form an INA or an AMA. As difficult as these choices are for all of us involved including the director of ADWR it would be an abdication of our responsibility to the future of the communities and our children to do nothing in the face of what is now happening. None of these choices is perfect and no choice will satisfy everyone but if protecting the aquifer for the future is important it is clear what we must do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Calvin Allred". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Calvin Allred

I regret that there are some who don't seem to be concerned about the aquifer. They seem to think that there is an unlimited supply of water and therefore they can farm every acre and more. There are others who own lands that a few years ago they could sell for a few hundred dollars an acre but now they may be able to sell for a few thousand dollars an acre. I bet some would like to admit they want to sell land and walk away with their money. There are a few others who will be part of the AMA initially and this is unfortunate.

If there was an unlimited supply of water in this basin we could easily get farms and we would all be happy but there is not. Water is being controlled and protected all around us. Both ground water and surface water is subject to controls in New Mexico, most of Arizona and in some other states to the west. In almost every irrigated farming area in the west there are laws that have rights to water and some that control.

It is important for the future of the communities, schools and other businesses that we control the aquifer. Blocking the can down the road will only make it more difficult and costly. There may be need to reduce the acres being farmed as it is but if we let more acres go in it will only compound the problems and costs to those involved. Planting new is costly and therefore taking them out of service significant financial impact. Doing this now will be far less painful than waiting until the aquifer changes later.

The State of Arizona has given us two methods to protect aquifers, the AWA and the AIA. There are therefore only three choices: do nothing, form an AWA or an AIA. As difficult as these choices are for all of us involved including the director of ADWR it would be an application of our responsibility to the future of the communities and our children to do nothing in the face of what is now happening. None of these choices is perfect and no choice will satisfy everyone but if protecting the

Sincerely,

Clayton Allred