



September 12, 2023

Phoenix AMA Groundwater Users Advisory Council
Arizona Department of Water Resources
1110 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Frank Fairbanks, Stephen Bales, Stephen Cleveland, Leslie Meyers and Rory Van Poucke:

The Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA) appreciates your steadfast commitment as a Groundwater Users Advisory Council member to promote the effective management and conservation of our finite groundwater supplies in the Phoenix Active Management Area (AMA).

The AMWUA municipalities – Avondale, Chandler, Gilbert, Glendale, Goodyear, Mesa, Phoenix, Peoria, Scottsdale, and Tempe – collectively provide water to 3.7 million Arizonans (more than half of the state’s population) as well as businesses and industries that are critical to our state and national economies. Each AMWUA city has established proactive water conservation programs to safeguard and promote sustainable management of their water portfolios, including groundwater. AMWUA and its members value conservation programs and projects, including long-term “legacy” projects such as Smartscape, Arizona Project WET, and the agriculture-focused Water Conservation Management Program, which are made possible because of the Water Management Assistance Program (WMAP) that is funded by the Groundwater Withdrawal Fee.

The AMWUA Board of Directors strongly supports increasing the annual fee rate for the WMAP to ensure these legacy water conservation programs can continue and new innovative conservation projects can be funded. The AMWUA Board is concerned that the current \$0.25/AF from the Groundwater Withdrawal Fee is insufficient for the WMAP to fund important conservation projects for all water sectors in the Phoenix AMA. This is evident by the current projections noted by ADWR at the September 2022 GUAC meeting that show the WMAP will be unable to support conservation projects as soon as 2025.

Arizona Municipal Water Users Association

3003 North Central Avenue, Suite 1550, Phoenix, Arizona 85012 • (602) 248-8482 • amwua.org



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With the Phoenix AMA facing diminished Colorado River water and groundwater challenges, as shown by the recent Phoenix AMA Groundwater Model, it is more important than ever to advance and amplify conservation efforts within the Phoenix AMA to protect our water supplies and manage demand. Recommending to the ADWR Director an increase in the Groundwater Withdrawal Fee - specifically for the WMAP - is crucial to our unwavering commitment to protect groundwater in the Phoenix AMA and reinforces the importance of water conservation programs and projects to the overall sustainable management of our water resources.

Accordingly, AMWUA would greatly appreciate the Phoenix AMA Groundwater Users Advisory Council recommending to the ADWR Director an increase to the Groundwater Withdrawal Fee. This would ensure that the Water Management Assistance Program is adequately funded and can continue supporting current conservation efforts and future projects.

Sincerely,

Warren Tenney
Executive Director

C: Tom Buschatzke, Director
Carol Ward, Assistant Director – Water Planning & Permitting Division
Natalie Mast, AMA Director