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**Demand: The Douglas AMA Mgmt Goal must be revised**

1 message

**Christian Sawyer** [REDACTED] >

Thu, May 25, 2023 at 11:55 PM

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Bcc: sscantlebury@azwater.gov

*This message is mainly addressed to the ADWR but I have BCC'd other affiliated or interested parties and gov't officials.*

I believe that being cordial and extending good faith is important for a healthy society. I am now finding it hard to continue extending good faith to you, ADWR, after your recent proposal for the Douglas AMA Management Goal. I do not believe you hold concern for the wellbeing of the communities in this basin.

Over the last two years I've had many conversations with local stakeholders about groundwater. I've spoken with farmers, residents, and gov't officials. There are a plurality of perspectives in our basin about groundwater policy; some support groundwater regulations, some do not.

However, there are two opinions which are held by nearly all residents in the basin: 1) We want to continue an agricultural and rural way of life; and 2) We no longer want to lose our water to non-local water users. Entities from Minnesota, California, and elsewhere have been coming to our valley, extracting our limited and essential groundwater resources, converting that water into profit and then moving that profit away from Arizona.

This theft of our natural resources only exacerbates the problem of our declining water levels. Many of my immediate neighbors have lost their wells, resulting in leaving their homes, losing large amounts of money on new wells, or resorting to hauling water (which is especially difficult for some of our elderly neighbors).

There are many ways to address groundwater depletion and there will certainly be many failures as we attempt to do so. However, it should be obvious that there is one imminently reasonable and statutorily justifiable way to help address groundwater depletion: **Make sure our groundwater policies serve our local citizens first and foremost by prioritizing water rights for locally residing water users.**

Only one change was made from the initial draft Management Goal: The word "communities" was replaced with "water users". The word "communities" was the only thing many of us in the basin were happy about regarding the initial draft. Indeed, the whole purpose of electing an AMA in our basin was to protect the local communities here. The language of "water users" broadens any protections that our Management Plan may provide to include non-local entities.

Time and again you have heard from us, the residents, that we are not happy with losing our water to non-local entities. It is both insulting and violent that you have changed this wording of the goal, while not making any of our requested changes.

I feel strongly that you will regret the decision you've made. It is clear that you do not respect the wishes of our community, and we realize that expressing our wishes is no longer sufficient. We must now demand that changes be made.

I demand that you change the language of our Management Goal to reflect the intentions of Title 45 (<https://www.azleg.gov/ars/45/00401.htm>):

"It is therefore declared to be the public policy of this state that in the interest of protecting and stabilizing the general economy and welfare of **this state and its citizens** it is necessary to conserve, protect and allocate the use of groundwater resources..."

I am no longer expecting that the ADWR will act in good faith or in good will, and so I do not expect that you will meet this demand. I strongly suspect that you are motivated by political and economic pressures which have no regard for the wellbeing of our local communities.

With this in mind, I will be doing everything in my power to legally enforce our demanded changes to the Goal. I will mobilize the local community, I will find assistance from gov't officials and NGOs, I will secure legal counsel and representation for judicial review.

I will certainly call upon the spirit of Cesar Chaves, Chief Cochise, MLK Jr., Jesus Christ, Frederick Douglass, and all of my ancestors who made great efforts and sacrifices for my future. Many of these heroes not only fought for life and liberty, they sacrificed themselves for such cause. I will do the same.

I will make sure a legal precedent is set which protects those who depend on their local water sources. I will make sure a social precedent is set which inspires citizens to always fight for access to the groundwater which keeps them alive.

I do this because I love my land and my people and I choose to live a life of meaning and purpose, toward a better future for the next generation. When purpose demands courage, courage must be sought.

You will see this come to fruition at the public hearing. Many people will be there demanding that our wishes be fulfilled. Some will be locals, some from elsewhere. Some will have high standing and pedigree, some will have humble reputations. Some will be polite, some will be angry. We will all be united in our effort.

If you don't change the Management Goal to reflect the majority of basin resident's shared desire, to protect our **local communities'** wellbeing and economic stability, you will also see us move forward with the judicial review process, and we will have many allies supporting us in that effort as well.

In all likelihood, if you do not change the Douglas AMA Management Goal, you will disgrace your names and the reputation of the ADWR. If you have consciences, you will not feel well within yourselves as you maintain a willful ignorance of the violence you are doing to our basin's communities.

I demand that you, ADWR, slow down and deeply consider the legacy you leave for yourselves and the consequences that your actions will have for our communities. I demand that you be courageous, purposeful, and oriented toward love rather than fear.

I know you can do it, that you can take a stand against those pressures which are not aligned with the truth in your hearts. Let your conscience be your guide, rather than being driven by your bureaucracy-addled minds. Do the right thing.

Be courageous.

Christian Sawyer, Douglas resident, well owner.