

January 19, 2023

Via Email: managementplans@azwater.gov; tbuschatzke@azwater.gov; nlmast@azwater.gov; kmiller@azwater.gov

Mr. Thomas Buschatzke
Director
Arizona Department of
Water Resources
1110 W. Washington
Street, Suite 310
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Ms. Natalie Mast
AMA Director
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Mr. Kyle Miller
AMA Director
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1110 W. Washington
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Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Local Input on Douglas AMA Management Goal

Dear Mr. Buschatzke, Ms. Mast, and Mr. Miller:

We are a coalition of farmers based in the newly-formed Douglas AMA, and we would like to express our input regarding an AMA Management Goal. We represent multi-generational pioneer farms of the basin, some of which have been in operation since the 1940s. Our farms range from four acres up to 5,500 acres and represent a collective 12,000+ acres that produce a variety of crops such as alfalfa, dry beans, corn, cotton, pecans, peppers, melons, root crops and winter squash. The farms employ a pool of jobs for the local community and their crops supply large agricultural markets, as well as local ranchers, land owners, school districts, food banks, and farmers markets. We are truly rooted in our communities' legacy as an agricultural economy and are committed to its continued existence.

Therefore, we propose the following AMA Management Goal for your thoughtful consideration:

The management goal of the Douglas AMA is to preserve existing agricultural economies of the basin by incrementally reducing water use up to 25% over 25 years to approach long-term water sustainability.

We farmers believe that in reducing water use 1% per year over the next 25 years, we can maintain the financial viability of our farming operations, while at the same time move towards long-term water sustainability for the basin. However, we would like to see exceptions and/or exemptions for farms under 200 acres, whose water use is minimal. We suggest that we should convene every five years to reevaluate this conservation approach, in the case that our water conditions improve as a result of recharge and water reductions. As lifelong residents of the community, we see the necessity to preserve our livelihoods, which are the backbone of the local economy, as well as our most precious resource, water, so that our children and future generations will be able to continue our legacy.

As farmers will be central in meeting the AMA water conservation goals, we are hopeful that Governor Hobbs' appointments to the Groundwater Users Advisory Council (GUAC) will be from the Douglas Basin and representative of our local farming community. We suggest one or more of the below individuals to serve on the GUAC, all of whom are experienced and respected farmers with deep roots in the community and a strong desire to improve regional water supplies. These individuals will apply for nominations once the appropriate forms are available on the Governor's Boards and Commissions website.

Aaron Cardona, Arevalos Farm

Jackie Watkins, San Ysidro Farm

Paul White, Whitewater Farms

Alfredo Zamora, SAMKAI Farms LLC

Nathan Zuck, Rye Creek Farms

We thank you for the opportunity to shape the AMA Management Goal for the Douglas Basin, and hope that you take our proposal and GUAC recommendations into consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

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San Ysidro Farm

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