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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: December 14, 2021

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: Jan Leshner   
Acting County Administrator

Re: **Retirement of Ursula Nelson and Appointment of Interim Department of Environmental Quality Director**

Pima County Environmental Quality Director Ursula Nelson will be retiring effective January 4, 2022. Ms. Nelson has successfully served as the Environmental Quality Director since August 2000. During her tenure, Ms. Nelson has effectively managed all aspects of the department across programs related to air and water quality, solid waste and recycling, code compliance, and public education and outreach. In addition, Ms. Nelson has been a well-respected representative of Pima County on numerous boards and committees focused on the review and formulation local, state, regional and national environmental standards intended to protect communities and their residents. Ms. Nelson's expertise, professionalism and personable approach will be greatly missed.

To fill the role of Director upon Ms. Nelson's retirement, I am appointing current Deputy Director Barbara Escobar as Interim Pima County Environmental Quality Director effective January 4, 2022. The attached resume for Ms. Escobar highlights her decades-long experience. Ms. Escobar is well-qualified in performing laboratory analysis of environmental samples of water, wastewater and hazardous waste using Environmental Protection Agency approved methodologies and protocols, and managing laboratory testing facilities. Her work has been performed at the local and state levels including managing our Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department Laboratory and the Compliance and Regulatory Affairs Office.

Ms. Escobar joined the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality as Deputy Director in August of 2021, and has proven herself to be a valued asset in managing the technical, operational budgetary and personnel activities of the department, along with developing and enhancing relationships with other County departments and external organizations.

Ms. Escobar's assignment as Interim Environmental Quality Director will be reviewed with her and Deputy County Administrator Carmine DeBonis Jr. in April 2022 to determine whether to extend the interim assignment, make a permanent appointment or initiate an open recruitment.

## Attachment

c: Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Francisco García, MD, MPH, Deputy County Administrator & Chief Medical Officer,  
Health and Community Services  
Ursula Nelson, Director, Environmental Quality  
Barbara Escobar, Deputy Director, Environmental Quality

# BARBARA A. ESCOBAR

## OBJECTIVE

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To obtain the PDEQ Director position where my managerial, technical and interpersonal skills and relevant experience would benefit the organization in nurturing a positive culture.

## EXPERIENCE

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August 2021 to Present                      Pima County PDEQ                      Tucson, AZ

*Deputy Director*

- Providing direct support to the Department Director by identifying and resolving technical and operational problems associated with Department environmental qualify activities.
- Establishing personelle relationships to manage the current 39 positions within DEQ, assisting with the various recruitments and selection of new staff.
- Developing collaborative relationships with various PC Departments such as DSD, RFCD, and DOT to enhance work productivity and effectiveness.
- Representing PDEQ on Local, State and Federal forums, and developing working relationships with outside county departments and in particular the Pima County residents seeking DEQ's guidance.
- Assisting in the forecasting of the FY21-22 budget and development of the FY22-23 budget, working closely with Finance and Grants departments in maintaining fiscal responsibility.

November 2016 to August 2021                      Pima County RWRD                      Tucson, AZ

*Compliance & Regulatory Affairs Manager*

- Managed 62 employees working within the Compliance & Regulatory Affairs Office (CRAO) Laboratory, Industrial Waste Pretreatment Unit and the Data Management Unit ensuring that RWRD adheres to EPA/ADEQ regulation; NPDES/Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Biosolids Sewage, Reuse & RCRA solid waste requirements while also adhering to Pima County Merit System Rules & Administrative Procedures.
- Represented RWRD with various local, state and federal agencies, private industry, contractors, public committees and forums.
- Manage the full CRAO budget (3 separate units) of over \$4.1 million annually.

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August 2010 to October 2016          Pima County RWRD          Tucson, AZ

*Wastewater Laboratory Manager*

- Managed the Compliance & Regulatory Affairs Office Laboratory by coordinating the laboratory activities (up to 32 personnel, sampling, > 48K analyses) in adherence with EPA/ADEQ regulation; NPDES/Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Biosolids Sewage & RCRA solid waste requirements as well as Pima County Merit System Rules & Administrative Procedures. Maintained ADHS laboratory licensure.
- Represented RWRD & the laboratory activities with various local, state and federal agencies, private industry, contractors, and public committees and forums. Served as the Arizona ELAC Chair & Vice Chair & TNI Assessment Forum Chair.
- Manage the laboratory budget of over \$2.2 million annually.

August 2003 to August 2010          AZDHS          Phoenix, AZ

*Environmental Laboratory Licensing Program Supervisor*

- Managed the ADHS environmental laboratory licensure program by coordinating and implementing the laboratory inspection and evaluation program under minimal supervision.
- Ensured adherence to EPA/FDA/ADEQ regulation of NPDWR, NPDES/Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, RCRA, Bottled Water, etc. for compliance reporting.  
Recommended the issuance of licenses or initiating licensure alternative actions, including the denial, suspension or revocation of licensure which may have resulted in hearing proceedings.
- Conducted licensure and compliant investigations and recommended necessary corrective actions.
- Supervised up to 7 environmental laboratory licensing surveyors which included over 5 years of full-time telecommuting for all staff.

February 1994–August 2003          AZDHS          Phoenix, AZ

*Federal/ State Licensing Surveyor*

- Evaluated environmental laboratories and determined their compliance with governing federal and Arizona statutes and administrative rules required to meet the standards that safeguard public health and employee safety.
- Extensive traveling, compiling information for on-site audit reports, and laboratory consultations assuring data quality.
- Familiar with the Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air

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Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act approved methodologies and regulations.

October 1989–February 1994      Pima County TSS Lab      Tucson, AZ

*Various Positions listed as follows:*

- *Quality Assurance/Safety Officer – Chemist Specialist* from 2/93-2/94. Reviewed and enforced the laboratory's Quality Assurance Plan and Standard Operating Procedures for performing EPA approved methods for analysis of water, wastewater and hazardous waste. Directly supervised 4 members of the QA unit. Coordinated sampling/analysis projects.

As the Chemical Hygiene Officer, ensured the laboratory's compliance with OSHA 1910/1200; performed safety audits, organized hazardous waste disposal and conducted monthly safety meetings.

- *Inorganic Unit Supervisor - Chemist Specialist* from 6/92-1/93. Coordinated and participated in the Inorganic analyses (metals & non-metals) of environmental samples. Directly supervised 10 members of the Inorganic unit. Reviewed and ensured accuracy of Inorganic data with adherence to EPA approved methodology and SOPs specifications and completion of purchase orders.
- *Inorganic Chemist* from 1/90-6/92. Performed Inorganic analyses of environmental samples using EPA approved methods and laboratory specified QC protocols. Analyzed samples utilizing Flame, Cold Vapor and Graphite Furnace Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy, Inductively Coupled Emission Spectroscopy, Ion Selective Electrodes, Titrimetric and Colorimetric methodologies.
- *Organic Technician* from 10/89-12/89. Performed Organic analyses of environmental samples using EPA approved methods and laboratory specified QC protocols. Analyzed samples by Gas Chromatography and Infrared Detection. Performed extraction/condensations of wastewater samples using 600 series and SW-846 methodologies.

February 1988-September 1989      Ross Laboratories      Casa Grande, AZ

*Analytical Laboratory Technician*

- Performed in-process and final product analyses using FDA approved methodology and laboratory specified QC protocol. Analyzed samples using Gas Chromatography, High Performance Liquid Chromatography, Flame Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy and performed various general laboratory tests (gravimetric, titrimetric, colorimetric, etc.)

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Summer 1986          American Cyanamid          Pearl River, NY  
*Biochemical Research Intern*

- Monitored the effects of alcohol induced hypertension and analyzed the effectiveness and antihypertensive and antilipolytic drugs on rats. Used fat cell assays, UV spectrometers, centrifuges and microscopes. Handled Sprague-Dawley rats extensively, having to feed them tubally and performing dissections. Presented research findings to approx. 25 scientist of the company, from which the work contributed to a publication titled *Antilipolytic Activity of Viprostil, a Transdermally Active Antihypertensive PGE2 Analog*.

## EDUCATION

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1983–1987          University of Arizona          Tucson, AZ

- B.S. in Agriculture, Major in Food Science.
- Dean’s Awards & Honor Roll
- Gamma Sigma Delta Initiate (Scholastic Honor Society)

## CERTIFICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS & RELEVANT TRAINING

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AZ State Certified Mediator, Completion of 40 hour training, November 2012. Currently participate as a Pima County Mediator on average 4 cases per year.

Pima County RWRD Leadership for Supervision Program, 56 Hour training completion.

Current Pima County Library Advisory Board Member.

Current Vice-Chair of the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Council.

International Boundry Water Commision Southeastern Arizona Community Forum (IBWC SEAZCF) Board Member 2018-2020 term.

AZ Water Association, “Laboratory Analyst of the Year, 2014” recipient.

*“Analytical Ethics & Sampling/Data Integrity”* and *“Final Report and QC Requirements”* both presented at the AZ Water Association Environmental

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Sampling Workshop in Tucson, November 2014 & Phoenix, March 2016.

*“Top 10 ADHS Audit Findings”*, presented at the Wastewater Analysis Workshop – AZPDES Permit Requirements, presented May 20-21, 2009

Drinking Water Chemical Laboratory Certified, USEPA-EMSL, Cincinnati, OH, July 1994 & Drinking Water Microbiology Laboratory Certified, USEPA, Berkeley, CA, November 1994.

Chair of the National State Assessor Bimonthly Teleconference Forum (4/06-present) and Chair for The NELAC Institute, Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) from 11/6-2/08.

State of Arizona – Supervisor Leadership Training completed in 12/03 (Evaluation, Leadership, Coaching and Corrective actions, etc.). Anger Management & Assertive Communication courses completed in 3/07. Safety Training through on-line training most recently completed in February 2010 (12 courses, ranging from OSHA to Job Safety Analysis).

*Techniques for Using In-Depth Data Review & Assessment for Audits and Investigations*, co-presented on September 27-28, 2005 in Phoenix, AZ and September 12-14, 2006 in Charleston, SC and June 17-19, 2008 in Newark, NJ. Specifically gave 3 presentations on *“A Process for using data Audits for Routine Inspections”*, *“Techniques for Detecting Inappropriate Practices,”* for both Metals, Ion Chromatography and Autoanalyzers.

*Techniques for Using In-Depth Data Review* co-presented on January 18-20, 2008 presented at The NELAC Institute Conference in Newport Beach, CA. Specifically gave 2 presentations on *“Technology Data Review – Metals Data”*, *“Techniques in Detecting Inappropriate Practices-Metals Data”* & Mock Audit Sessions.

*“Methods Update Rule Information, 40 CFR Parts 122, 136, 141, 143, 430, 455 & 465”*, presented at the The NELAC Institute (TNI) Lab Assessor Forum in Denver, CO on January 2007.

*Current Versions of the Published Methods”* and *“Evaluating Calibration Blank Requirements for ICP analyses,”* both presented at the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) Lab Assessor Forum in Kansas on August 2006.

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