



MEMORANDUM

Date: November 29, 2016

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **November 26, 2016 *Arizona Daily Star* Article Regarding Southern Marana Odors**

The County and our Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (RWRD) respond to odor complaints on a regular basis. In almost all cases, the source of the odor is identified, and, if part of the County's system, easily rectified. Even today we are dealing with odor complaints related to a private sewer system constructed within the La Encantada retail development. In most cases, we find that odor complaints arise from private systems constructed by developers to avoid the higher cost associated with constructing public wastewater infrastructure.

In the case of the odor in Marana, it is likely the odor arises from the large composting operation on Ina Road, directly across from the wastewater treatment facility. During a recent bicycle ride through the area, I noticed the odor resembled more of a natural decomposition of earthy vegetative materials rather than the generally unmistakable odors arising from a wastewater treatment facility.

We will continue to work with surrounding property owners in the Town of Marana to isolate and identify the causes of the recent odor complaints. Our RWRD budget contains a substantial allocation for odor reduction and elimination. In fact, over \$3.5 million annually is dedicated by RWRD solely for this purpose.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Jackson Jenkins, Director, Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department

http://tucson.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/pima-county-unable-to-pinpoint-mystery-stench-in-marana/article_41cdb7ef-5f63-534d-b5ac-6692aaad3c56.html

Pima County unable to pinpoint mystery stench in Marana

By Murphy Woodhouse Arizona Daily Star Updated Nov 26, 2016



Photos by Mike Christy / Arizona Daily Star 2014

Tres Rios Water Reclamation Facility

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After a string of complaints of foul, manure-like odors in southern Marana, county environmental quality and wastewater treatment officials have been trying to identify the source for the past two weeks but so far have had little luck.

In a Nov. 23 press release, the town of Marana reported that a number of people had raised “concerns” about the smells, and directed residents to contact the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality.

Dustin Fitzpatrick, a PDEQ air compliance manager, said his office has sent investigators to the area near the stretch of North Silverbell Road between West Ina and North Cortaro roads on several occasions, but added that “we have not been able to come up with what the source is.”

In the complaints filed, descriptions of the smell have ranged from compost-like to rotting meat, according to Fitzpatrick.

While there is no definitive proof at this point, John Warner, with the county wastewater reclamation department, suggested that activities at the Tres Rios plant could be a source, possibly in combination with nearby compost and solid-waste facilities. If the plant is the source, it is “most likely” what Warner described as “burps” coming from wastewater digesters.

“The three of us could be putting out a little bit,” he said, adding that fall’s warm days and cool nights can exacerbate odors.

To get to the bottom of it, a contractor with Warner’s department is set to start monitoring the area and collecting air samples Monday morning.

“We’re going to try to gather data for a week, and if it’s us, we’ll do everything we can to control what we have going,” he said. “If it appears to be someone else, we’ll share the information with them.”

PDEQ Director Ursula Nelson said there have been no reports of illness stemming from the odors, and that there is no reason to believe there are any health risks, a point echoed by Warner.

“It’s just a nuisance,” Warner said.

The Tres Rios plant was likely the culprit behind similar complaints roughly a year ago, though Nelson and Warner said those issues had been resolved.

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