




MEMORANDUM

Date: April 24, 2007

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

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator 

Re: Drought Response and Declaration of Stage One

Last summer, the Board of Supervisors adopted a Drought Response Plan that included an ordinance establishing response measures for drought and prohibitions against water wasting. This memorandum updates you on the status of the drought response plan. I am also declaring a Stage One Drought Level in coordination and cooperation with the City of Tucson, who is also declaring a Stage One Drought Level. We are pleased to be able to coordinate this important matter with the City.

Drought Response Plan Status

Following adoption of Ordinance 2006-43, the Health Department formed a task force and monitoring committee to coordinate the development of the response plan and to develop the drought monitoring system. A task force subgroup comprised of local area water providers reviewed regional drought response plans. There is agreement that response plans need to be tailored to the individual system capabilities of the various water providers. Pima County should coordinate drought declarations, implement response actions in unincorporated Pima County, and support drought response measures by assisting in education and publicizing the drought.

The monitoring committee has met four times to define an acceptable definition of drought and monitor drought levels. The monitoring committee recommends that drought indicators be streamlined and made consistent with the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) Drought Monitor Report published monthly. This will require minor revisions to the drought response ordinance. The monitoring committee also functions as the ADWR Local Drought Impact Group, a county-level group created voluntarily to coordinate public awareness, provide impact information to local and state leaders, and develop and implement local mitigation and response options.

Status of Drought and Declaration

Drought conditions in the Southwest have persisted. According to the March 2007 Arizona Drought Monitor Report, the short-term and long-term update for most of Eastern Pima County is for moderate to severe drought levels to continue.

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Based on this information as well as discussions held by the monitoring committee and the task force, I am declaring a Drought Level-Stage One. The effect of this declaration is:

- The public will be asked to implement voluntary reductions in water use;
- Restaurants will be asked to provide water upon request only;
- Hotels are urged to conserve water; and
- A public education campaign will be initiated to promote awareness about water conservation issues.

Public education will be implemented by the Public Works community relations group who will orient publicity and education material to issues related to County services. They will visit editorial boards to recommend a weekly monitoring report in the newspaper. Commonly used brochures, pamphlets and posters will be limited, leaving that to the water providers. A web page with drought information is on-line and accessible from the County's homepage. The Health Department is responsible for enforcing the water wasting provisions of the ordinance in unincorporated Pima County. I have also directed a review of all County facilities to ensure we are in compliance with our own provisions against water wasting.

Regional Efforts

In order to respond effectively to the ongoing drought conditions in Pima County, a coordinated effort with the other jurisdictions and water providers is needed. Therefore, a joint press conference declaring drought will be held on Wednesday, April 25, 2007, to include the City of Tucson and other regional water providers.

Ordinance Revisions

After considerable review, the monitoring committee is recommending adjustments to the drought response ordinance, primarily to make the drought indicators consistent with the state drought program and the Arizona Drought Monitoring Report. A revised ordinance will be brought to the Board for your consideration within the next 30 days.

CHH/jj

- c: John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works
Enrique Serna, Deputy County Administrator for Health and Medical Services
Dennis Douglas, Health Department Director
Suzanne Shields, Regional Flood Control District Director
Kathleen Chavez, Water Policy Manager, Regional Flood Control District

Tucson Water SOURCES

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 24, 2007

contact: Mitch Basefsky, 791-4331 or 419-8365 (cell)

City Manager and County Administrator Declare Stage 1 Drought Response Press Briefing and Interview Opportunity

As authorized under their respective Drought Preparedness and Response Plans, Tucson City Manager Mike Hein and Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry have declared a Stage 1 Drought Response for the Tucson Water service area and unincorporated Pima County. A Press Briefing has been scheduled to provide the media with additional information on the actions that will take place during a Stage 1 response. **The briefing will take place on Wednesday, April 25, 2007 at 9 AM at Sunset Park, immediately north of Tucson's City Hall at 255 W. Alameda.**

Declaration of a Stage 1 Drought Response provides a mechanism for the City and County to implement a variety of activities to ensure the community is aware of the climatic conditions and is taking appropriate steps to use water efficiently and effectively. While this declaration recognizes that persistent drought conditions are present, it does not mean that a water shortage exists. *Following the briefing, at approximately 10AM, a demonstration City facility water audit will take place at the Ward 6 Council Office, 3202 E. 1st Street.*

Declaration of a Stage 1 drought response is based on local and regional climatic conditions and forecasts. Because Tucson Water is actively using Colorado River water as part of its potable water supplies, climatic conditions along the Colorado River watershed also are important factors in determining the appropriate drought response level.

Other water providers have or are declaring drought responses. Metropolitan Domestic Water Improvement District remains in a Drought Stage 2-Warning. The Town of Marana intends to declare a Drought Stage 1. Community Water Company of Green Valley also intends to declare a Drought Stage 1. The Town of Oro Valley and Flowing Wells Irrigation District have not yet declared a drought stage. Residents should check with their local water provider for the drought measures in effect in their service areas.

Copies of the executive summary of Tucson Water's Drought Preparedness and Response Plan will be available at the Press Briefing. The complete plan can be viewed at www.tucsonaz.gov/water. Copies of Pima County's Drought Response plan are available at www.pima.gov/drought.

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