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"Water In Perpetuity" vs. "A 100-Year Supply"
Future planning vs. status quo

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A 100-year supply presupposes any aquifer, some 41% of our state supplied water through groundwater sources, can go to zero and that's OK with the state. That's pure nonsense! Further, no matter if or if not ADWR issues a 100-year adequacy report, it does not prevent land subdivision. It is merely a statement of water availability based on information supplied to them by the developer's "credible" sources.

Rigid lines of water protection within the state are ones where water is protected by an AMA, or, other locations not having an AMA. It presents water budgeting as either absolute protection or virtually no protection. That leaves rural Arizona to fend for itself as far as the "100-year supply" is currently applied.

So you would think that rural Arizona would be pleased at their ability to regulate through self-determination. But the cries of ineptness and powerlessness seem to come from everywhere. The Mohave County Board of Supervisors says, (as do other boards) "We do not have any authority to reject a subdivision because of inadequate water." If that isn't bad enough, ADWR states, "Counties should manage themselves." The county points to the state for water budgeting oversight and the state points to the county. So what's the big deal?

The big deal is contrasting a "100 year supply" to "Water in Perpetuity" as a totally different "planning-horizon-mindset," recognizing that it is only "Water in Perpetuity" that will make growth stable and present a forward looking plan for our very limited water sources.

In our current status-quo mentality, sooner rather than 100 years later, water will end in our "100 year supply" defined areas. That should be a wake up call but it seems that land subdivision management, and legal oversight for water adequacy, gets lost in multiple quagmires of bureaucratic finger pointing to everywhere except toward any agency's self-accountability, beginning with the Governor and ending with local Boards of Supervisors, leaving no one in-between out for their share of planning shortsightedness.

The Governor did however; initiate Growing Smarter legislation to protect our water through a water budget. That is why our BOS adopted the words, "Water in Perpetuity" when signing on with our BOS Resolution to Growing Smarter. You would think those words would locally stimulate a plan to develop and meet a water budget but did it, not a chance.

Our water in aquifers here is some 12,000 years old and older. We are mining water a mile a minute in the state. Regardless of the recharge claims, year over year, we continue to mine water. And yet, no one will provide legal oversight to contain growth within water availability, not even the Governor. Legislators reject every sensible water bill that comes along at every opportunity. That unfortunately is lobbying to our greatest disservice.

How then do we go forward? It's easy. Just dump the "100-year supply" and simply replace it with "Water in Perpetuity" Then, "Water in Perpetuity" presents a mandate to all-future planning, balancing water within growth, statewide.

Further, ARS 11-821.C.3 states, "An analysis of how the demand for water that will result from future growth projected in the comprehensive plan will be served by the water supplies identified in subdivision (a) of this paragraph or a plan to obtain additional necessary water supplies." No mention is made of any 100-year time frame here! If supply does not exist, either find it or make conservation measures that will provide it. No conditions, just do it!

Further, "Water in Perpetuity" fits 45-401, 1980 Groundwater Management Act stating, (in part and paraphrase retaining content) "The public policy of this state is to conserve, protect and allocate the use of the groundwater resources of the state and to provide a framework for comprehensive management ----- use and conservation --- of the groundwater in this state." This fits well with Growing Smarter and its water budgeting provisions. This Act, used statewide with "perpetuity modeling," presents management tools as an inclusive state overview, using "Water In Perpetuity" as its strategic vehicle.

Further, this considers the private well situation by consolidating city, county and state demands from single or multiple water sources. Then, ALL consumption becomes one plan and one water budget. That's governmental self-determination at its very best with meaningful local authority. Then, if a deficiency appears, get creative and find ways to bring it into line. Future generations depend on us.

Further, the question of legal oversight and who has the authority to manage growth is clear. "Water in Perpetuity" becomes strategic to both state AND local government. The Groundwater Act then satisfies both, AMA and not-AMA. ARS 11-821.C.3 is also satisfied. "Water in Perpetuity" through Growing Smarter becomes a Planning and Zoning mandate through recommendations presented to their commissioners and Boards of Supervisors, to legislate subdividing through their General Plans. Best of all, the long term health and welfare of our people, and the protection of Arizona's greatest resource, OUR WATER are secure, IN PERPETUITY. No one should ever have to live in fear of running out of pure clean drinkable water, never ever!

Where water ends, growth ends. I believe then, "Water in Perpetuity" presents a forward looking model, combining intelligent growth with foresight through water programs. That recognition and programming process allows an expansion of conservation, education and technologies. It places in the hands of the state and developers, a way to make subdivisions compatible with our desert surroundings, using creativeness to retain beauty, reduce energy and protect our water. "Perpetuity" becomes the centerpiece for all Arizona's forward looking planning. That is good for business, and most of all, certainly good for future generations.

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