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OFFICE OF THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
198 Main Street
Yuma, Arizona 85364

ORIGINAL



Robert L. Pickels, Jr.
County Administrator

September 6, 2013

Arizona Corporation Commission
DOCKETED

SEP - 9 2013

ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL

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Arizona Corporation Commission
Docket Control
1200 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007

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Re: Docket NO. WS-03478A-12-0307

Dear Commissioner:

I am happy to see that the discussion of the rate increase for Far West water may finally be put to rest. I am sure it is likely that the residents in the area affected will not be pleased with the recommended rate increase, but it is important to bring stability to this large utility that services so many residents. If a rate increase will foster such stability, then it should be supported.

As you are aware, the Far West customers came out in force opposing any rate increase for this organization because of misgivings created by prior operational problems and poor customer service practices. As a newly elected County Supervisor for the area, I found it important to get to know the owners as well as inspect their operations to see for myself if they were doing the things necessary to service community now and in the future. Because of local reputation, I was surprised but pleased to find the owners, Andy and Paula Capestro, eager to open their entire operation for me to inspect.

The first day I spent with them they satisfied my curiosity about their resolve and doing whatever it takes to service this community many years into the future. We then visited three of their seven plants. They presumably took me to the best ones and I was justifiably impressed with the modern facilities I saw, as well as the long-term employees that I was able to interview.

After my initial contact with the owners, I attended a meeting with 300 to 400 concerned residents that were not pleased to hear my initial reports of modern facilities and concerned owners. I gave the entire group my personal cell phone number and asked them to contact me personally and show me the operational problems that they have with this organization so that I might be better informed.

After giving out my cell phone number, I found that the residents in the foothills area are not bashful about making calls in the middle of the night. I was determined to learn the truth about Far

West water so I did not hesitate to leave my home at 2:00 a.m. to investigate overwhelming smells and inspect Far West water operations in the middle of the night. As hard as I tried, and with the help of hundreds of residents, I could not pinpoint any problems with the operation with the exception of one plant that I did not see on my initial inspection.

The Marwood plant was nothing to be proud of when the owners showed it to me. It was noisy in the middle of the night, recently had chemical imbalance that created smells and the ponds associated with it were septic and being used to irrigate the golf course. I visited with homeowners close to this plant and all were discouraged. The owners of Far West water were already making corrections to this facility and I was able to witness it. They addressed noise problem at night, reworked the operation to control the smells and cleaned up the ponds. I have visited with the owners recently and they are extremely pleased about the current condition. Now that this one facility is operating acceptably I have not received a customer complaint in many months.

I am not naïve to the fact that this operation has probably been receiving special attention because of the scrutiny they are under by the Arizona Corporation Commission. I do believe the owners are serious about long-term solutions and that they plan on servicing this community personally for many years. I know that I will be available to the community to communicate any future problems and work with the owners on community relations. It is my hope that the Arizona Corporation Commission sees fit to move forward on the recommendations and stabilize this utility for many years to come.

Best regards,



Russ Clark
Yuma County Supervisor District 3