



Water Sustainability and Arizona's Blue Ribbon Panel

Western Coalition of Arid States Fall Conference
October 28, 2010

Benjamin H. Grumbles, Director
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

A Need for Change



Water scarcity and variability,
growth and development,
climate change, emerging contaminants,
enduring misperceptions

Reduce Waste

- Arizona's water conservation incentives
- Water efficient technologies and practices
 - WaterSense
- “Full” cost pricing

Reuse Water

- Arizona Regulatory Framework Promotes Reuse
 - Reclaimed water quality standards to foster reuse; protect water quality and human health
 - Water use credits for recharging treated wastewater
 - 58% of wastewater treatment plants distribute water for reuse/recharge preserving fresh water for potable uses

Arizona is a national leader:

- Reclaimed water distribution systems – urban and rural, large and small – Tucson is a recognized leader in this area
- Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station – 20 billion gallons of effluent reused for cooling annually
- Bureau of Reclamation Yuma Desalting Plant – treats saline agricultural return flows in accordance with Treaty with Mexico

Restoring Watersheds

- Collaborative Planning and Smart Growth
- Green Infrastructure
- Arizona Examples:
 - Yuma East Wetlands
 - City of Tucson Rainwater Harvesting

Blue Ribbon Panel

Governor Brewer announces formation of Blue Ribbon Panel for Water Sustainability

- Three Co-Chairs: ADEQ, ADWR, and ACC
- 40 members representing legislature, governments, tribes, environmental groups, academia and industry
- Meetings began February 2010
- Final Report with findings/recommendations due by December 2010

Purpose

“To advance statewide sustainability of water by increasing the reuse, recycling and conservation of water to support continued economic development in the State of Arizona while protecting Arizona’s water supplies and natural environment”

- Public Perception/Acceptance
- Regulations and Permitting
- Infrastructure/Retrofit
- Conservation/Recycling/Efficiency/Energy Nexus
- Economic/Funding

Emerging Themes

- Potentially duplicative regulatory programs at state/county/city level
- Public Perception of quality issues/safety with reclaimed water use
- Reclaimed water quality standards should be reviewed/updated – expand allowable uses?
- Examine financial and ratemaking incentives to increase recycled water delivery
- Further research needed – contaminants of emerging concern

Emerging Themes

- Water recycling and renewable energy movements are gaining steam, despite debates over emerging contaminants and energy policy details
- We need to find ways to encourage sustainability – increasing use of alternate water sources
- Technology, innovation, collaboration will help policy makers and the public:
 - Embrace the 3R's
 - Connect “the drops and the watts”
 - Overcome old myths and misperceptions, emerging challenges

- Clean Water Act jurisdiction over waters and activities
- Border battles over Nogales wastewater
- Snowmaking at Snowbowl Ski Resort

Questions??

