

EQUINOX CENTER

May 20, 2011

Council Member Sherri Lightner
City Administration Building
202 C Street, MS #10A
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Council Member Lightner,

Equinox Center would like to again applaud your leadership on the San Diego City Council to craft an intelligent, comprehensive policy for a sustainable water supply for the City. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the policy. With this letter we are providing more detailed comments on the most recent draft, as requested by Council Member Alvarez at this week's Natural Resource & Culture Committee hearing.

While we recognize that some of our comments may be more appropriate to include in the implementation plan proposed in your policy, I am providing them nonetheless so that you can be aware of our perspective and include them wherever you deem appropriate.

- 1) The policy or implementation plan should include clear targets and benchmarks for goals. In particular, Equinox urges the City to adopt a policy that includes a stronger focus on efficiency and sets a "gallons per capita per day" target that goes beyond what is required in targets set in SBX7. As the City's PUD pointed out in their presentation of the UWMP at the NR&C committee meeting this week, they selected the method to calculate their target based on what would provide the largest target, not what would provide the most efficient use of water. Equinox Center's research shows that the least expensive solution to our water challenges in the future is to reduce our overall demand. Being more aggressive in our water efficiency targets today will save both the City and consumers money in the long run and would distinguish the City of San Diego as a leader and model for efficiency in the arid southwest. Without a bold vision and aggressive targets for water use, we run the risk of overspending on large infrastructure projects that the city and region cannot afford in this era of fiscal austerity.
- 2) We support the idea of updating the City Council's Policy regularly, tied to the cycle of updating the City's Urban Water Management Plan.
- 3) We support the idea of the City Council's policy including a "steeply" tiered rate structure and/or "budget based rate structure" as laid out in Equinox Center's 2009 Water Pricing Primer. We also would support the idea of rate structures being tailored to specific classes of users.
- 4) If parameters for customer specific data are going to be laid out either in the Council's policy or the implementation plan, we support the inclusion of lot size and number of residents along with geographic zones and evapotranspiration rates.

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- 5) We are also particularly supportive of the following policies already included in the draft :
- recognizing the inter-relationship between energy and water and calling for energy issues to be incorporated into decisions about water
 - creating partnerships with businesses and other organizations to incubate new technologies or scientific research to assist the City with developing a sustainable water supply
 - Low Impact Development projects
 - Reducing reliance on imported

Thank you again for allowing Equinox Center the opportunity to comment on this important policy. We stand ready to provide research, data and additional comments to support your work on this critical issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Ann Tartre, Executive Director
Equinox Center