

Groundwater Use/Designation of an Active Management Area: Environmental Organizations Submit Petition to Arizona Department of Water Resources



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The San Pedro Alliance (“Alliance”) submitted a September 20th document to the Arizona Department of Water Resources (“ADWR”) styled:

Petition for a Rule to Designate the Upper San Pedro Basin as an Active Management Area under Title 45, Section 412 of the 1980 Groundwater Management Act (“Petition”)

The *Petition* requests that the ADWR adopt a rule pursuant to Arizona law to designate the Upper San Pedro Basin as an Active Management Area (“AMA”).

The *Petition* argues that groundwater use in the Upper San Pedro Basin exceeds an amount necessary to preserve the existing supply of groundwater for future needs. The A.R.S. 45-412 is cited which is paraphrased to state:

... when the use of groundwater exceeds an amount necessary to preserve the existing supply of groundwater for future needs, designation of an Active Management Area (“AMA”) is an option to remedy this situation.

The Director of the ADWR is provided the authority to designate such an area:

... if the director determines that any of the following exists: 1. Active management practices are necessary to preserve the existing supply of groundwater for future needs.

The *Petition* provides historical background regarding five AMA’s that have previously been designated in Arizona and prior petitions requesting designation of the Upper San Pedro Basin. It cites subsequent information that has been developed arguing the need for a designation of this basin as an AMA.

The *Petition* concludes that the water consumption exceeds an amount necessary to preserve the existing supply of groundwater for future needs based on the following arguments:

1. the aquifers of the Upper San Pedro Basin continue to be overdrawn; that,
2. the federal government is the largest user of groundwater in the Upper San Pedro Basin, a fact that was completely ignored in ADWR’s March 9, 2005, denial of our October 10, 2000, Petition; and that,

3. multiple other AMAs (Phoenix, Tucson, Prescott and Santa Cruz) have already been designated based on “safe-yield,” where “no more groundwater is being withdrawn than is being replaced annually,” and where water use in the Upper San Pedro Basin grossly violating this principle should have resulted in AMA designation in 2005.

A copy of the *Petition* can be downloaded [here](#).