

UTILITIES DIVISION

Administration



DATE: October 26, 2012

TO: Mayor and Council

THROUGH: Josh Copley, Deputy City Manager

FROM: Bradley M. Hill, R.G., Utilities Director

RE: Citizens Petition Requesting City Council discussion on water issues that was distributed at the October 16, 2012 City Council Meeting

Mayor and Council, below are my responses to the citizen's petition that requested the City of Flagstaff to do the following:

1. *To further examine its usage of all water supplies in the city and in surrounding areas;*

RESPONSE: Staff has addressed the way the City uses its water supplies in two venues. First, the completion of the Utilities Division Water Resources Master Plan dated April 8, 2011 discusses in detail how the City uses its water supplies today and historically. Second, City staff in collaboration with the Water Commission has been drafting a set of Water Policies for City Council's upcoming consideration and adoption. The purpose of developing a comprehensive set of municipal water policies is to provide the fundamental principles and guidelines for how the Utilities Division achieves the goals and objectives outlined by City Council. The objective of these policies will be to preserve the public's trust in our water, wastewater and stormwater systems through compliance with state and federal water quality, water management and flood plain management laws; guide strategic long-term planning; and demonstrate leadership in the stewardship of our limited natural resources. There are numerous policies that will address or guide how the City will utilize its water supplies into the future.

2. *To postpone artificial snowmaking until stronger and more encompassing city standards are met and consented upon by the public;*

RESPONSE: The City Manager plans to convene a group of researchers, scientists, engineers, medical professionals, etc to provide the City

direction on what specifically to study, identify what steps are necessary for understanding the health effects of Compounds of Emerging Concerns or CECs (e.g., pharmaceuticals, endocrine disruptors and antibiotic resistant genes). One objective will be to provide guidance to the City on developing a work plan on how best to move forward. Since there is quite a bit of interest on this subject nationally, the City would like to seek funding, both locally and nationally to conduct the necessary sampling, testing and laboratory analysis. Additionally, the City also believes it is critical that this work be scientifically valid given the importance from a local and national perspective. Therefore, we are considering engaging outside scientists, such as the National Water Research Institute to validate and lend credibility to any findings and conclusions.

Lastly, It is important to note that the City renewed the contract to Snowbowl for an additional five (5) years on March 8, 2012 since they met all the requirements outlined in the original Agreement signed on March 20, 2002.

3. *To actively be accountable for any infringements on the health of our whole community by moving forward with an outdated resolution of reclaimed wastewater regulation and lack of serious analysis of potential contaminants within this wastewater:*

RESPONSE: As previously mentioned in the response under Item #1, City staff in collaboration with the Water Commission has been drafting a set of Water Policies for City Council's upcoming consideration and adoption. One of the polices will specifically address "water reclamation and reclaimed water"

Additionally, the City's reclaimed not only meets the highest federal and state reclaimed water quality standards (A+ quality) established for wastewater treatment, but it also meets all water quality regulations for drinking water that are established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Safe Drinking Water Act. In a proactive step, Utilities recently took the extra step to have an international testing laboratory, licensed to do business in Arizona, evaluate the quality of Flagstaff's reclaimed water beyond what is required by the regulatory agencies.

4. *To fund and encourage more research about the safety of reclaimed wastewater:*

RESPONSE: As previously mentioned in response under Item #2, the City Manager plans to convene a group of researchers, scientists, engineers, etc to provide the City direction on what specifically to study,

identify what steps are necessary for understanding the health effects of Compounds of Emerging Concerns or CECs.

Additionally, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has recently created its own state-wide Advisory Panel on Emerging Contaminants that will convene for the first time on December 7, 2012. ADEQ invited me to represent the City of Flagstaff on this panel along with 34 other members representing the University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University, Arizona State University, Arizona Department of Health Services, U.S. Geological Survey, Army Corps of Engineers, national resource conservation districts, several law firms and other municipalities from around the State.

5. *Use and allocate a finite resource that's essential to all life, and not just to the existence of business, more responsibly.*

RESPONSE: As previously mentioned in response under Item #1, City staff in collaboration with the Water Commission has been drafting a set of Water Policies for City Council's upcoming consideration and adoption.