



October 3, 2018

Mayor and Councilmembers,

As you are aware, some Marana residents have asked the Town to consider providing interim relief for a water quality issue. Although residents are generally appreciative of the Town Council's decision to go forward with treating groundwater, some members of the community have expressed concern about consuming water in the interim until new water treatment facilities are installed.

To summarize the Town of Marana's water quality initiative, it is important to note that the Town has been consistent in meeting the standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Although these standards apply to the *regulated* compounds in the water, the Town is voluntarily making a substantial investment in treating some *unregulated* compounds as well. These unregulated compounds (commonly referred to as PFOA, PFOS, and 1,4-Dioxane) appear in varying concentrations in household, commercial, and industrial products. These unregulated compounds have been identified in the groundwater as well, and while there are no standards for these compounds in drinking water, there are health advisory levels that communities may voluntarily adhere to.

The EPA has established health advisories at 70 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, and 0.35 parts per billion for 1,4-Dioxane for unregulated compounds based on the agency's assessment of peer-reviewed science. These health advisory levels are established considering the most sensitive populations and with a margin of protection that includes a lifetime of exposure to these compounds from drinking water.

Marana started monitoring for these unregulated compounds voluntarily in 2016 as soon as it was made aware of levels exceeding the health advisory in neighboring areas served by Tucson and Metropolitan Water. Out of seven separate water systems that make up Marana Water Service, two service areas (Picture Rocks and Airline/Lambert) have levels that exceed the advisory levels. We have continued periodic monitoring throughout our service area confirming our initial observations but also showing a generally-declining trend in the sample levels.

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Since our initial sample study in 2016, the Town has notified all its water customers three times regarding these unregulated compounds in the water and also directed them to our web pages that provide information on what residents can do to reduce exposure to these unregulated compounds.

At the August 14, 2018 Marana Town Council Meeting, staff presented details of our sample observations and qualified the difference between a health advisory and a regulated standard. Although EPA's health advisory is based on vulnerable populations consuming water with unregulated compounds over a lifetime, the Town considered options to voluntarily reduce levels of these compounds in our water system. At that meeting, the Council directed staff to start planning for a treatment process that would significantly reduce unregulated compounds in the water, and to look at funding options to cover the cost of such an investment. Council's direction to voluntarily treat water in the two affected systems addresses the uncertainty regarding if, and when, unregulated compounds will become regulated. Furthermore, although we are seeing a decline in the levels of concentration of these compounds in our groundwater, we cannot predict how long it will take for these levels to go below the advisory levels, or what the advisory or regulatory levels will be in the future.

This Council has taken the long-range and comprehensive view of the situation, and while some may construe this Council's quick action as a response to an immediate and dire health and safety concern - it is not. We are voluntarily selecting the treatment option, and we have explained that it will take approximately 20 months to build and put the treatment process into service.

Some members of the community have suggested that until the treatment facilities are being built, the Town deliver bottled water and/or provide credit to them on their water bill. There seems to be a perception that consuming unregulated compounds in the short term will have an immediate and detrimental effect on the consumer's health. There is no literature or science known to us to validate that level of concern. For those residents who wish to expect a different composition of water in the interim, they can indeed opt for other alternatives on their own. Certainly with media headlines and unsubstantiated statements repeated on social media, such a reaction from some residents is not unexpected.

Staff will continue communicating with residents with information on the facts about the unregulated compounds. We have engaged with participants at our *Community Conversations*, and will soon have a podcast dedicated to this topic. Our web page www.maranaaz.gov/water-quality provides the background on these unregulated compounds and will soon include useful information on the timing and development of the treatment process. Finally, we continue to meet with residential and business groups

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interested in facts about water quality and our plans to develop a robust water delivery system.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Jamsheed Mehta
Town Manager