

Dear Council Member Lee,

Thank you, as always, for the transparency and deliberation you have shown through this whole process, including in your newsletter today entitled "*Project Blue: what it means to say no*". I did want to respond to two critical issues that you raised today to include some additional facts that I do not think were communicated to you in the disclosures you received.

Project Blue locations outside of Tucson

Summary: It is unlikely that Beale Infrastructure could fully implement Project Blue outside of the city of Tucson, and if it did, it would not impact the City of Tucson's water allocations and future sustainability

First, the county documents obtained via public records request by AZ Luminaria reporter John Washington do identify the locations of the five proposed phases of Project Blue through 2035, including those outside of the city of Tucson. Those locations include Sahuarita and unincorporated Pima County areas nearby that could be served by the Avra Valley Water Reclamation Facility, and Marana, which could be served by the Tres Rios Water Reclamation Facility or much smaller treatment facilities in the Town of Marana.

Second, all groundwater use in Pima County in the Santa Cruz River watershed is regulated by the state as part of the Tucson Active Management Area (AMA) under the Ground Management Act of 1980, so no large new users of water can come in and use supplies other than those already controlled by existing water rights holders. If Beale Infrastructure/AWS were to buy private land to use for a data center, they would only have the small existing groundwater rights and allocation for that land, which would not be enough to provide for a data center. The only feasible private landowners that could support a data center would be the Green Valley Pecan Company and associated orchards. If they wanted to sell their land and water to a data center company, that would not change the water balance in our watershed since most of that irrigation water is lost to evaporation and evapotranspiration currently.

Third, most of the water rights holders in the Tucson AMA have small allocations compared to Tucson, including Sahuarita and Marana. The only political entity with a large 'unused' allocation of water, is the Tohono O'odham Nation. As part of the Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act of 1982, 28,200 acre-feet of reclaimed water from the Tres Rios WRF are held in trust for the Nation, and they have the right to lease that water to an external user. But it seems unlikely that would happen given that it was extractive use of groundwater by outsiders that caused the San Xavier District of the Nation to suffer such cultural and economic harm in the first place, but that is a decision that they would make as a sovereign nation.

Fourth, it is possible that the federal government could provide some water and land for a data center as part of Davis-Monthan or other military installations in our region. But that would be using water and land allocations that already belong to the federal government and don't have any bearing on the city of Tucson's groundwater, surface, and reclaimed water rights.

Of all the reclaimed and non-irrigation, potable water available in the Tucson basin and metro area, the City of Tucson is by far the largest water dealer. Due to basic water supply accounting and restrictions in place due to the state Groundwater Management Act of 1980, it would be exceedingly difficult for Project Blue to implement its FIVE phases (only three of which have been made public) without large-scale orchard losses or leasing of water from the Tohono O'odham Nation. It is correct that smaller-scale data centers could go forward in Sahuarita, Marana or elsewhere. However, and **critically**, this would NOT affect the city of Tucson's water portfolio nor our ability to sustainably plan for its water use into the next century. Although it would still be happening in our greater Santa Cruz River watershed, water use from any data centers outside of the city limits would NOT affect our allocation or use of water. If we were not in an Active Management Area, then it would certainly be possible for Beale Infrastructure/AWS to go upstream of Tucson and pump enormous amounts of water, thus reducing our own groundwater supplies -- [as is currently happening in the Willcox area of Cochise County] -- but we are in complete control of our local groundwater supplies thanks to state legislation.

The proposed water use and water supplies monitoring program

Summary: It raises concerns that the Department of Hydrology and the Water Resources Research Center on campus (or even the Department of Environmental Sciences or the School of Natural Resources and the Environment) are not involved in the proposed monitoring program

I think it is wonderful that University of Arizona researchers could be involved in shaping any aspect of any implementation of a data center. In fact, the community needs to see some sort of third-party assessment of water use and project implementation. Additionally, I have excellent colleagues and close collaborators, including on a new funded grant to help guide designs for the proposed Santa Cruz River Urban National Wildlife Refuge, in the College of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture, where the Drachman Institute is based. I value their work, research, and contributions **enormously**. However, there are no hydrologists, physical water scientists, or water resources or legal water rights specialists at the Drachman Institute, or in their broader college. A project like this, with complex surface and subsurface water supply issues, potential groundwater recharge offsets, requires a collaborative monitoring and assessment team with diverse technical qualifications. If there was to be a monitoring program that our local academic community and the broader Tucson community would have significant faith in, it would have to include hydrologists and water resource specialists.

Best regards,



Michael Bogan, PhD