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June 30, 2011

Attention: Kevin Snyder, Waste Programs Division
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
1110 West Washington Street
MC4415B-1
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Notice of the Availability of the
Proposed Remedial Objectives Report for the West Van Buren WQARF
Registry Site in Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Mr. Snyder:

The Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District (SRP) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) May 16, 2011 Proposed Remedial Objectives Report for the West Van Buren WQARF Registry Site in Phoenix, Arizona (Draft Report). SRP has reviewed the Draft Report and offers the following comments:

Comment #1: SRP supports the Remedial Objective to protect against possible leaching of hazardous substances in surface and subsurface soils to the groundwater.

Comment #2: Although SRP agrees generally with the Remedial Objectives proposed for Municipal and Agricultural Groundwater Use, SRP believes it is important to provide clarification regarding the future use of SRP wells near the West Van Buren WQARF area. In addition, ADEQ's discussion relating to the Roosevelt Irrigation District (RID) appears to be incomplete in certain important respects.

SRP has approximately eight groundwater production wells located near the northern, western and southern boundaries of the West Van Buren WQARF area that historically have been used for agricultural/irrigation purposes. To date, SRP's groundwater use has not been impacted by the alleged contamination. As indicated in SRP's completed Land and Water Use Questionnaire, dated September 21, 2007, given changing land use conditions, SRP

anticipates that these wells will be used for drinking water purposes in the reasonably foreseeable future, either by directly connecting the wells to municipal distribution systems within the Salt River Reservoir District (SRRD) or piping to municipal water treatment plants located on the SRP canal system as a drought supply. SRP projects that average annual pumpage from SRP wells near the West Van Buren area in the future will be in the range of 16,000 acre-feet.

Any groundwater within the SRRD, the geographic region of the Salt River Federal Reclamation Project and the area within which SRP manages surface water and groundwater rights, is reserved for use within the SRRD's boundaries. Absent a continuing agreement with SRP, RID's diversion or withdrawal of water within the SRRD boundaries for use outside those boundaries is prohibited by, among other things, the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the Salt River Valley Water Users' Association, long-established federal Reclamation law, Arizona groundwater law, the Arizona agricultural improvement district statutes, and prior court decrees and judgments that are binding upon RID. RID's only legal basis for its past withdrawal and use of such water has been the existing agreement with SRP, and that agreement terminates no later than 2026.

Groundwater in the West Van Buren Site underlies the SRRD. Therefore, any remedial proposals that involve transporting water off project lands would be prohibited, absent a water exchange agreement with SRP to keep SRP whole in accordance with the body of law prohibiting off-Project water transportation and use. No such agreement exists that extends beyond 2026.

Contractual agreements between SRP and RID allow RID to operate wells within the western SRRD to relieve water logging conditions that were present in the early 1920's and that, at the time, threatened local farming operations. Since approximately the 1960's, land use within the SRRD has been gradually shifting from predominantly agricultural use to urban use. Presently, approximately ten percent of land is under cultivation in the western SRRD. With this changing land use, the incidental recharge from irrigation return flows also has decreased, reducing the water logging conditions that occurred historically. RID has been pumping approximately 108,000 acre-feet annually from the western SRRD since 1928 for irrigation use. Based on SRP's records, the recent (2010) average depth to groundwater in the western SRRD is approximately 136 feet below ground surface.

The term of the agreements between SRP and RID is 99 years, with expiration in 2026. Pursuant to these agreements, RID has been using the pumped groundwater from the western SRRD for irrigation deliveries within its service area outside of the SRRD. Several of the RID wells are located within the West Van Buren WQARF area and have various levels of contamination. RID has proposed to connect its contaminated wells within the WVB area to a treatment system and deliver the treated groundwater to West Valley cities outside of the

SRRD for a new drinking water end use. RID cannot continue pumping at any level beyond 2026 without a water exchange agreement with SRP. SRP has not entered into any such agreement and has no present intention to do so.

Comment #3: SRP finds the proposed Remedial Objectives for Private Wells confusing. SRP therefore suggests making the Remedial Objectives for Private Wells consistent with those for Municipal Groundwater Use and Agricultural Groundwater Use in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 of ADEQ's draft Remedial Objectives. Specifically, SRP believes that the Remedial Objectives should clearly delineate between Private Wells that are threatened and require protection versus those that are impacted and require restoration or replacement. Thus, SRP believes that the Remedial Objectives for Private Wells should be as follows:

- To protect a water supply for potable and non-potable use by those private well owners that are threatened by contamination in the WVB WQARF site. Actions are needed for as long as the wells are used for potable and non-potable purposes and their use is threatened by the contamination from the WVB WQARF site.
- To restore, replace, or otherwise provide a water supply for potable or non-potable use by private well owners if the current use is impaired or lost due to contamination from the site. This action will be needed for as long as the need for the water exists, the resource remains available and the contamination associated with the WVB WQARF site prohibits or limits groundwater use.

Comment #4: As mentioned in Comment #2 above, the RID canal water has been and is currently used for irrigation purposes within RID's service area outside the WVB WQARF area. Based on ADEQ groundwater sampling data, RID's reported pumping rates for the RID wells within the WVB WQARF area, and RID's operational blending practices, it does not appear that RID's groundwater use has been impacted by the contamination. Findings of a screening risk analysis performed by AMEC on behalf of SRP show no apparent unacceptable public health threat due to RID's current operations (SRP, August 2010). RID's future use of groundwater from within the SRRD is limited as described in Comment #2 above.

SRP does not support the proposed Remedial Objectives for Canal and Surface Water Use as drafted. The Remedial Objectives are redundant of the Remedial Objectives proposed for Private Groundwater Use. SRP suggests modifying the Canal and Surface Water Use objectives to more clearly be aligned with the goals related to protecting end uses of the water. This would ensure that potential remedial strategies identified in the Feasibility Study are protective of the existing and any reasonably foreseeable future water uses off the RID canal system. The following is a suggested Remedial Objective for Canals and Surface Water

Use that focuses on protecting against the loss or impairment of identified end uses of canal water:

- To protect existing irrigation water uses off the RID canal. Actions are needed for as long as RID has a continued legal right to pump groundwater from within the SRRD to the extent contamination within the site impairs the existing RID canal water uses based on applicable water quality or health based standards associated with the chemicals of concern.

Because the agreements between SRP and RID expire in 2026, it is questionable whether RID's intention to transport groundwater from the WVB WQARF area for potable use outside this area is reasonably foreseeable. Any action to protect reasonably foreseeable potable water uses in the RID canal would be needed only for as long as RID has a continued legal right to pump groundwater from within the SRRD, and only if and when the RID canal is used for the transport of domestic water sources, and contamination from the site results in exceedances of Safe Drinking Water Act Maximum Contaminant Levels for the chemicals of concern in the canal water immediately upstream of a drinking water treatment plant.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Wanttaja for". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kevin Wanttaja, Manager
Environmental Services