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CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215

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## **ADEQ Enters Into Consent Order with Sahuarita for Wastewater Treatment Problems**

PHOENIX (Dec. 31, 2007) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) Director Steve Owens announced today that ADEQ and the Town of Sahuarita have entered into a consent order to address issues with the town's wastewater treatment system.

The rapidly growing town in southern Pima County expanded its wastewater plant from 250,000 gallons a day to 490,000 gallons a day in mid-2006 without receiving a required Aquifer Protection Permit (APP) from ADEQ, a violation of state law. ADEQ is considering enforcement against the town for the violation.

Despite the increase in 2006, the town needs to expand the treatment plant more. The consent order will allow the town to treat up to 200,000 additional gallons of wastewater a day at its present treatment system, but the town is prohibited from exceeding this increased amount until it constructs a larger treatment facility. Sahuarita also must begin operation of the first phase of the expansion within six months of signing the order.

“This is a classic case of a town outgrowing its wastewater infrastructure,” Director Owens said. “This consent order will stabilize Sahuarita’s wastewater treatment planning and help them deal with the demands being placed on their wastewater system because of the explosive growth they have been experiencing.”

Wastewater treatment plant officials in Sahuarita recently submitted an application to ADEQ for approval to expand their wastewater treatment plant to accommodate 1.5 million gallons a day. Under the consent order, Sahuarita cannot issue any additional capacity assurance forms until ADEQ issues the APP for a design flow of 1.5 million gallons a day.

Additionally, the consent order requires Sahuarita to track the total amount of available monthly flow at the facility and prepare a monthly report containing the maximum average daily flows to and from the facility. Flows cannot exceed an average monthly flow of 690,000 gallons a day. The treated wastewater discharged from the facility also must meet Class A+ effluent standard, the highest standard for effluent.

If Sahuarita violates the consent order, it could be fined up to \$5,000 a day for each violation.