



WATER SERVICES DIVISION

Administration



Date: June 18, 2020
To: Flagstaff City Council
From: Brad Hill, R.G., Retired – Water Services Director
Re: Councilmember Aslan's FAIR – June 30, 2020
Reasonable Restrictions on Potable Water Use

Last week Councilmember Aslan and myself discussed his upcoming FAIR Item at the June 30th City Council meeting regarding what reasonable restrictions on potable water could the City implement? I was requested to provide the entire City Council with an overview of what we discussed and staff's recommendation on a proposed solution that the entire Council may want to consider.

City Code 7-03-001-0014 E.2.c - Strategy Level II Water Emergency states that "No Person shall use potable water for filling ornamental fountains, artificial ponds and streams". However, the City Council may want to consider prohibiting the filling of recreational or amenity lakes using potable water outright and not just during a Stage II Water Emergency? I suggested to Councilmember Aslan that Council may want to discuss what the Arizona Department of Water Resources adopted in 1987, known at that time as the Lakes Bill. That Bill was adopted into Statute as A.R.S. §45-132 which I have provided the complete language below in this Memo.

In general, A.R.S. §45-132 prohibits the filling of bodies of water for landscape, scenic or recreational purposes unless it is filled with effluent (i.e., recycled water) or stormwater, etc. This prohibition only applies within the large urban parts of our State, known as Active Management Areas and does not apply to the rest of the State including the City of Flagstaff. I have highlighted in yellow those sections of the Statute that at a minimum the City should look at and consider whether it wants to adopt these concepts into City Code.

Depending upon Council's direction, I am willing to assist in anyway.

§45-132. Filling large bodies of water for landscape, scenic or recreational purposes prohibited; exceptions; preemption

A. Except as provided in subsection B of this section, in an active management area established under chapter 2 of this title, a person shall not use any water for the purpose of filling or refilling all or a portion of a body of water.

B. This section does not apply to a body of water if any of the following applies:

Water – Wastewater – Reclaimed Water – Stormwater

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1. The body of water was filled before January 1, 1987. If the surface area of the body of water is increased on or after January 1, 1987, this exception does not apply to the quantity of water that is added.

2. The director has determined that substantial capital investment has been made in the physical on-site construction of the body of water before January 1, 1987. If the surface area of the body of water is increased after it is initially filled, this exception does not apply to the quantity of water that is added.

3. The body of water is located in a recreational facility that is open to the public and owned or operated by the United States, this state, a city, town or county, a flood control district established under title 48, chapter 21 or a multi-county water conservation district established under title 48, chapter 22.

4. The body of water is filled and refilled exclusively with any one or any combination of the following:

(a) Effluent.

(b) Storm water runoff that is not subject to appropriation under section 45-141.

(c) Poor quality water used pursuant to a permit issued under subsections C and D of this section.

(d) Groundwater withdrawn pursuant to a drainage water withdrawal permit issued under section 45-519.

(e) Groundwater withdrawn in the first year of a temporary dewatering permit issued under section 45-518.

(f) Groundwater withdrawn as part of a remedial action under title 49, chapter 2, article 5, including mitigation of a nonhazardous release undertaken pursuant to an order issued by the department of environmental quality pursuant to section 49-286.

(g) Water used pursuant to a permit for interim water use issued under section 45-133.

(h) Surface water except central Arizona project water that, as determined by the director, physically occurs at such times, in such quantities or under such other circumstances that it cannot be physically captured and beneficially used by any other holder of an appropriative right.

5. The body of water is an integral part of a golf course that complies with any applicable conservation requirements in the management plan for the active management area adopted under chapter 2, article 9 of this title.

6. The body of water is unsealed and is an integral part of an underground storage facility for which the director has issued a permit under chapter 3.1 of this title.

7. The body of water is a swimming pool that is owned and operated by a hotel, motel, country club or resort and has a surface area equal to or less than forty-three thousand five hundred sixty square feet. If a hotel, motel, country club or resort has more than one swimming pool, only one of those swimming pools may have a surface area greater than twelve thousand three hundred twenty square feet.

C. A person who seeks to use poor quality groundwater to fill or refill all or a portion of a body of water shall apply to the director for a permit to use the groundwater for that purpose. The director may issue a permit if the applicant demonstrates that all of the following apply:

1. The applicant otherwise has a right to use the proposed source of groundwater for the proposed purpose.

2. The groundwater because of its poor quality cannot be used for another beneficial purpose at the present time and it is not economically feasible to treat and transport the groundwater and use it for another beneficial purpose.

3. The withdrawal of the groundwater is consistent with the management plan and achievement of the management goal for the active management area.

D. A permit issued pursuant to subsection C of this section may be issued for a period of up to thirty-five years. The director shall determine the duration of the permit on the basis of the estimated life of the source of poor quality groundwater and the potential for future beneficial use. The director shall monitor the use of groundwater pursuant to the permit and shall terminate the permit if any of the conditions for issuance of the permit no longer applies. A permit may be renewed subject to the same criteria used in granting the original permit.

E. This section preempts all municipal and county laws, charters, ordinances, rules and regulations relating to the use of any water to fill or refill all or a portion of a body of water, except that this section does not preempt a law, charter, ordinance, rule or regulation that has previously been adopted, passed or enacted or is subsequently adopted, passed or enacted if the law, charter, ordinance, rule or regulation is more restrictive than this section.

c: Shane Dille, Deputy City Manager
Ryan Roberts, P.E., Acting Water Services Director