

Bennett, Jim

From: Cristin McVey <crismcvey@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2019 2:34 PM
To: LUEG, GroundWater, PDS
Subject: Public Comment BVGSP

Dear Planning & Development Services,

I wanted to submit a few comments about the Borrego Valley GSP that I will hope will be considered in the next phases.

1. As a ratepayer in the municipal area, I expect to continue to find ways to conserve water at my residence. I know of many other homeowners that are deeply committed to water sustainability and look forward to finding ways to conserve our municipality's water resources, now and in the future. As a homeowner, I would gladly pay higher rates (or a fees from a bond) that would solve this problem and ensure the sustainability of the region. It would also help our home values stabilize and increase over time.

2. As far as the structure of any new water rates, I would prefer that those rates be tiered, with water "wasters" paying higher rates (like we do for electricity). Currently we pay the same amount (I believe) per unit no matter how much we use. I know that some in the community feel that the residents should not have to cut back on water (learning that burden to the farms and golf courses), but I feel it should be a community-wide effort and many others feel this way too (maybe not as vocal though). Those who will not do so voluntary might if there was a little economic pressure.

3. As a librarian for the county, I have the opportunity to meet many people, especially families. I am concerned that lower-income families and seniors on fixed incomes will be adversely affected by higher water rates. I would like to see something built into the plan to help with the cost of higher water fees for low-income residents, whether this be rebates for newer water-saving appliances or low-income rebates, like we currently have for electricity...but I would prefer the former, because the goal is not to only lower the cost but to lower cost by saving water (not lowering the cost and still wasting water).

4. The environmental health problems from fallowing farmland and the dust that might become airborne is a concern as well. A plan to put wood chips on the fallowed land was passed around, but we do get heavy winds, so how well that will work is unknown. Ideally, we would reseed the area with native plants, so that those fields could become new flower fields (not plant dead zones) and attract more tourism. I also support low-water farming (if that exists?) for crops like cactus and others. I am not against having farms, but it needs to be done wisely.

Lastly, it is my sincere hope that Borrego Springs will enter into a new period of water sustainability, remembered and admired as a community that when confronted with a daunting assignment, pulled together to create a strategic plan that looked forward into the future, something that could become an example for other communities to emulate in managing their limited water resources.

I know that lots of people have been tirelessly working on the GSP, and I want to know that your work is very much appreciated.

Cristin McVey
Borrego Springs resident/county worker