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The Economics of Water Regulation in Arizona

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Abstract
The Economics of Water Regulation in Arizona

This paper will focus on the status of water management in Arizona under the Groundwater Management Act, with particular attention to the economic implications of policy decisions. How Arizona decision makers have repeatedly rejected recommendations that increase the price of scarce groundwater and have limited consideration of the environmental implications of water use will be addressed. Included in the paper will be a discussion of Arizona policy innovations, including the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District as a mechanism for meeting the Assured Water Supply provisions, and the state's intra-state and inter-state water storage and banking programs. The approaches to water management of fast-growing, groundwater-dependent regions wishing to preserve riparian areas will also be addressed. Finally, some issues related to private versus public provision of water in Arizona will be considered.

The paper will have a strong policy, rather than a technical, focus.

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Sharon B. Megdal will become Director of the WRRRC on July 1, 2004

About the Author:

Sharon B. Megdal, Ph.D. is Associate Director of the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC). She also serves as Professor and Specialist, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. She will become Director of the WRRC on July 1, 2004.

Dr. Megdal's work at the University of Arizona focuses on state and regional water resources management and policy. She is a frequent lecturer and writes a column for the WRRC's bi-monthly newsletter, *The Arizona Water Resource*. Recent papers include "How Water Management in Tucson, Arizona Has Affected the Desert's Landscape," a paper based on a lecture she gave in Santiago, Chile in May 2003, and "Managing to Avoid Crisis: A Look at Water Management Efforts in Rural Arizona," which was co-authored with Jackie Moxley.

Sharon B. Megdal holds Ph.D. and M.A. degrees in Economics from Princeton University, where she specialized in public sector economics and econometrics, and an A.B. degree in Economics from Douglass College of Rutgers University, where she was Phi Beta Kappa. In 1985 she was appointed by Governor Bruce Babbitt to the Arizona Corporation Commission, where she served until January 1987. Dr. Megdal chaired the Arizona Joint Select Committee on State Revenues and Expenditures, which finalized its recommendations in September 1989. Sharon B. Megdal served as Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Valley Water District from November 1991 until the closure of the District in June 1994. Dr. Megdal completed a six year term on the Arizona State Transportation Board in January 1997; in 1996 she served as Chairman of the Board. Dr. Megdal also served as President of MegEcon Consulting, a firm established in 1987.

Dr. Megdal currently serves as Vice Chair of the Arizona Medical Board and is a member of the Arizona Water Quality Appeals Board. She serves on the Tucson Airport Authority and the board of a private school in Tucson. Recent public service activities included serving as Co-Chair of the Governor's Transportation Vision 21 Task Force and as a member of the Governor's Water Management Commission.