

**CITIZENS' WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
(CWAC) Conservation & Education Subcommittee**

Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Legal Action Report and Meeting Minutes

1) Call to Order / Opening Statement:

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

2) Roll Call:

Those present and absent were:

Present:

Lisa Shipek (Chair)	Representative, Ward 3
Andrea Gerlak (Virtual)	Representative, City Manager
Raul Ramirez (Virtual)	Representative, Ward 1
William Ellet (Virtual)	Representative, Ward 6
Claire Zucker (Virtual)	Representative, City Manager

Absent:

3) Announcements – None

4) Call to the Audience – None.

5) **Review and approval of January 28, 2026, Legal Action Report and Meeting Minutes

- Member Gerlak moved to approve the Legal Action Report & Minutes. Member Ellet duly seconded the motion. The motion passed on a voice vote of 5 – 0.

6) 2026 Drought Implementation: High-Use Outreach Campaign — Candice Rupprecht, Water Program Superintendent, Tucson Water Department, Staff provided an overview of Tucson Water's high-use customer conservation campaign and its connection to the utility's drought preparedness and water use guidelines. The presentation explained that Tucson Water's Drought Preparedness and Response Plan is required by A.R.S. §45-342 and is submitted to the Arizona Department of Water Resources every five years. The plan was originally approved in 2006, with minor updates in 2012 and 2017, and key updates in 2020 to align drought stages and thresholds with the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan, incorporate climate adaptation planning, and support the One Water 2100 framework.

Staff reviewed the development and use of Water Use Guidelines, which are intended to increase awareness of drought conditions, provide customers with targeted conservation information, encourage water audits, and support implementation of audit

recommendations. The high-use notification process identifies customers whose annual water use is approximately two and one-half times higher than the average for their customer class. For 2026, the campaign is based on 2025 usage and includes single-family residential, multifamily, and duplex/triplex customers. The 2026 single-family residential notification list includes 9,861 customers, with a water use guideline of 89 CCF, or approximately 66,542 gallons, and a notification threshold of approximately 166,354 gallons annually.

The presentation also summarized ongoing process improvements to the campaign since it began in 2023. Improvements include updated messaging, a shared inbox, self-scheduling water efficiency checkups, OpenGov email tracking, QR codes, low-income customer outreach, ZIP code averages in customer letters, mailed letters to all high-use customers, alignment with Colorado River messaging, and pre/post analysis showing that water efficiency checkups scheduled as a result of notifications reduce water use by an average of 20%.

Staff further discussed specialized outreach for low-income customers and highest-use customers. Every household receiving a high-use letter that is also on a low-income rate receives a follow-up visit, with prior outreach reaching more than 50% of these customers. Looking ahead, staff intends to continue improving the campaign by engaging customers who have received multiple high-use letters, using Advanced Metering Infrastructure to identify continuous flow or potential leaks, and exploring how high-use thresholds and AMI customer alerts can be better integrated. No formal action was taken.

- 7) **Conservation Incentive Updates: Comm & MF Turf, MF Low-Income Retrofits, Res. Rainwater Harvesting & Res. High-Efficiency Toilets** - Candice Rupprecht, Water Program Superintendent, Tucson Water Department, shared Staff provided an overview of Tucson Water Conservation Program incentive updates, including commercial and multifamily turf removal, multifamily low-income retrofits, residential rainwater harvesting, and residential high-efficiency toilet rebates. The presentation connected these programs to One Water 2100 priority strategies, including improving outreach for low-income assistance programs, increasing water savings opportunities through customer incentive programs, researching new conservation technologies and approaches, and aligning stormwater standards, policies, and practices across the region.

Staff reviewed the Ornamental Turf Removal Program, which is supported by a \$1 million Water Infrastructure Finance Authority grant. As of April 2026, the program provides rebates for turf removal, new low-water-use trees, and rainwater harvesting basin capacity. Staff reported that the program has received 58 total applicants, completed 32 projects, removed approximately 292,235 square feet of turf, added 213 new low-water-use trees, created approximately 100,000 gallons of rainwater harvesting capacity, and achieved an estimated 33 acre-feet of annual water savings. Staff also noted that WIFA funding ends in June 2026 and future rebate amounts and program requirements are being adjusted.

Staff also provided an update on the Multifamily Upgrades Program, funded through a \$1.7 million WIFA grant. The program launched in July 2025 and is intended to retrofit older multifamily units with high-efficiency fixtures and appliances, including toilets, showerheads, faucets, aerators, tub diverters, dishwashers, and clothes washers. Eligible properties must be Tucson Water customers, constructed before 2006, in need of full upgrades, and located within moderate-high to high-priority areas on the Tucson Equity Economic Sub-index Map. Staff reported that 1,460 units have been completed, 115 units are pending, approximately \$1.3 million has been spent, and expected annual water savings are approximately 30 million gallons, or 92 acre-feet.

The presentation included updates to the Rainwater Harvesting Program, which was significantly revised in July 2023. The updated process moved to online forms, requires pre-approval and a site plan, includes a workshop requirement, and added post-installation site visits and improved data collection. Since July 2023, the program has supported passive, active, and combined rainwater harvesting systems; supported 1,248 trees; and documented more than 1 million gallons of basin storage and more than 659,000 gallons of tank storage. Staff also discussed a right-of-way basin pilot project, which showed broader stormwater, shade, and green space benefits but did not move beyond the pilot due to installation costs exceeding the rebate amount.

Staff concluded with an update on the High-Efficiency Toilet Program. The current program provides a \$100 rebate per toilet, with a two-toilet limit per property, for homes built before 2011 and toilets using 1.1 gallons per flush or less, or qualifying dual-flush models. Staff discussed participation trends, rebate denials, barriers to participation, product availability challenges, and current promotion efforts. Potential future policy changes under consideration include increasing rebate amounts, allowing customers to reapply after 10 years, creating tiered rebates based on toilet efficiency, and exploring a future direct-install model. No formal action was taken.

- 8) **Future Agenda Items:** The presentation was shortened due to time constraints. The Rainwater Harvesting Rebate and High-Efficiency Toilet Rebate portions of the presentation will continue at the May meeting. Staff also noted concerns regarding attendance for the May and June meetings. A Doodle poll will be created to determine the best meeting time.
- 9) **Call to the Audience** – None.
- 10) **Adjournment** at 3:59 p.m.