

## MANAGEMENT BOARD

### *Information Summary*

October 8, 2008

#### **Subject**

Status of the 2008 Legislative Forum

#### **Policy Question**

The Board will be asked for guidance on the proposed Legislative Forum Agenda (attached) and whether holding a Legislative Forum this November is timely.

#### **Background**

Last year, the AMWUA Board of Directors expressed interest in establishing a closer relationship with members of the Arizona State Legislature. Toward that end, AMWUA staff coordinated the development of a legislative forum to provide an opportunity for the AMWUA Board of Directors to meet with legislative leaders to discuss water management issues that may be addressed in the upcoming legislative session.

A number of key legislators who had a specific interest in water issues attended the legislative forum held in November of 2007. During that forum, members of the Board of Directors made a series of presentations about water issues of interest. Legislators also received information describing AMWUA members' water management programs, an overview of AMWUA, and various promotional items designed to help encourage conservation. The AMWUA Board determined that the legislative forum was an effective means by which to improve communication on water issues and that the forum should be held on an annual basis.

#### **Summary**

AMWUA staff has met with the Water Resources Advisory Group (WRAG) and held a meeting with the members' Intergovernmental Relations staff. The Intergovernmental Relations staff expressed concern that a legislative forum held in November 2008 would be premature since the new legislature would be in the process of identifying leadership and committee assignments.

Pursuant to prior Board direction, the AMWUA staff has continued to work with the WRAG to develop a series of draft presentations for the legislative forum and to identify issues that the Board may want to address during the forum. Issues identified as possible discussion topics include the importance and value of the Assured Water Supply Program, the importance of protecting our Colorado River supplies, the role of the Arizona Water Banking Authority in

assuring the sustainability of our future, renewable water supplies, the AMWUA Sustainability Policies, rural water issues, and the effectiveness of our water management structure. Attached is a proposed agenda, if a forum is to be held.

### **Policy Considerations**

- This forum will provide AMWUA Board members the opportunity to meet with key legislators to help the legislators better understand the challenges and issues facing the AMWUA municipalities.
- It will also provide an opportunity for the AMWUA Board of Directors to better understand the issues confronting policy makers in other parts of the state.
- The forum will help reinforce the position of AMWUA as a resource for water-related issues and information.
- Legislators will be in the process of being assigned to legislative committees and may not be ready to meet with the AMWUA Board in November.
- It may be premature to have AMWUA members' representatives meet with legislators until municipal legislative agendas are developed.
- There are a number of the Board of Directors that will not be able to attend the forum if it is scheduled in conjunction with the November Board of Directors' meeting.
- Other means of conveying information to new legislators could be equally effective in communicating policy positions.

### **Prior Committee Action**

At the September AMWUA Board meeting, staff was directed to work with the WRAG and the AMWUA member Intergovernmental Relations staff to develop a forum format. Toward that end, AMWUA staff held a joint meeting with the AMWUA WRAG and the Intergovernmental Relations staff to solicit input regarding how best to proceed with the development of the forum. During the course of the discussion, it was suggested that there may be more effective means by which to accomplish the goals of the AMWUA Board of Directors. It was suggested that one-on-one visits could provide an alternative means by which to work with legislators. It was also suggested that the timing of the forum may not be the most opportune, given that the new legislators would be pre-occupied with a number of competing issues, not the least of which is the 2009 state budget shortfall. Concerns were expressed that if the turnout to the forum was minimal, it could undermine the goals of the AMWUA Board.

## **Recommendations**

AMWUA staff recommends:

- The Legislative Forum be rescheduled to a time when legislators would be more readily available. AMWUA staff would work with the AMWUA Intergovernmental Relations staff to identify alternatives.
- The WRAG, the AMWUA members' Intergovernmental Relations staff, and AMWUA staff will identify alternative strategies to communicate AMWUA's interests and concerns to policy makers and coordinate the development of the content for presentations.

## **Attachment**

- **Attachment A** - Arizona Municipal Water Users Association 2008 Legislative Forum Draft Agenda