

**Letter to the Editor**  
San Diego Union Tribune  
**December 5, 2005**

**All water is recycled**

Regarding "Water plan secretly pushed" (News, Nov. 23)

Several points in the article seem to be based upon a lack of understanding of water reuse.

The city is not running a "stealth" program. The front page of the city Water Department's Web site ([www.sandiego.gov/water](http://www.sandiego.gov/water)) has a plainly marked Water Reuse Study Link. The study included public participation, including those opposed to water reuse.

The city proposes to treat wastewater to a level of cleanliness beyond that associated with bottled water. The water would leave the treatment plant so pure that minerals must be added to prevent damage to the pipes. Further, the city plans to mix this water with reservoir water and treat it again, prior to being distributed.

The fear that San Diego would be a guinea pig for water reuse is baseless. The water you are drinking right now is reused. We are at the tail end of the Colorado River, whose water includes treated wastewater from upstream cities. A more direct comparison to the city's plan is the northern Virginia, Upper Occoquan Sewage Authority. Since 1978, the authority has supplied 50 percent of the water for 1 million people. Their method is similar to the one proposed by our city. The UOSA treats wastewater, then deposits the treated water into the upper Occoquan Reservoir prior to another treatment and distribution to the people.

The San Diego Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers ([www.asce-sd.org](http://www.asce-sd.org)) supports the city's water reuse program.

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