

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) 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) supports the city's water reuse program.

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Letter to the Editor
San Diego Union Tribune
December 9, 2005

City will have to reuse (more) water

It's about time someone succinctly explained the issue of water reuse ("All water is recycled," Letters, Dec. 5). All water is reused but apparently many people have forgotten that.

Frankly, I don't know why the city is waiting when it comes to reusing water. It's truly unconscionable that San Diego is pumping about 175 millions gallons of reusable water back out to sea every day.

And those who think this reuse will never happen should be paying very close attention to the water level in both Lake Powell and Lake Mead: They are both dropping to historically low levels. Our source of "reused" river water may be seriously cutback/curtailed in the not too distant future.

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