



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS & MWA

Q.: *What is Mojave Water Agency's role in deciding development projects?*

A.: MWA is not involved in the decision-making process. Whether to allow—or not allow—a development project, whether it's commercial, residential, industrial, institutional or otherwise, is a decision that rests with the entity having the authority to make land use decisions. ***MWA does not have and therefore cannot exercise land use authority.*** Either a City/Town Planning Commission or City/Town Council, or the County Planning Commission or the Board of Supervisors approve or reject development projects.

Q.: *Why isn't MWA more aggressive about having a say in the development approval process?*

A.: MWA's legal mandate is very specific, which is: *"The agency may do any and every act necessary to be done so that sufficient water may be available for any present or future beneficial use or uses of the lands or inhabitants of the agency, including **without limiting the generality of the foregoing**, irrigation, domestic, fire protection, **municipal, commercial, industrial and recreational uses.**"* The Agency's role is to essentially meet present and future water demands.

Q.: *Because all development projects will require water, why isn't MWA involved in the approval process?*

A.: MWA is sometimes involved indirectly—but not directly in the approval process. The County and municipalities may look to MWA's long-range plans to develop their own water supply assessment, and use that information to influence their decision on whether to approve or deny a project. As the region's only water wholesaler, MWA imports supplemental water to serve municipal and private water agencies. Depending on the customer base of the water agency, they must also develop a long-range plan for meeting water demands, and that plan may involve purchasing water from MWA.

Q.: *If someone was opposed to a development project still in the planning stages, could they appeal to MWA for support and what would likely be MWA's position?*

A.: The Board of Directors does not have a policy stating they will or will not get involved, and have chosen to simply evaluate the merits of projects on a case-by-case basis and respond accordingly. Factors they will consider before deciding whether to oppose, support or remain neutral about a project are:

- some projects may identify potential negative impacts, but the project is required to take appropriate measures to mitigate the impacts;
- some projects may have potential negative impacts, but the impacts are negligible;
- some projects may have potential negative impacts, but the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages;
- some projects may generate a significant tax base that could benefit the Agency and its ability to meet its mission;
- some individuals, agencies or groups may request the Board to address broader "quality of life issues" such as impacts on transportation, schools, crime or health care--matters that do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Board;
- the Board could be placed in a position where competing requests are being made and the Board will have to choose in favor of one group over the other and it may be best to remain neutral.