

# How to Put Lipstick on a Pig

An Opinion by Chris Marley, Chino Valley Citizen

One of the attendees at the Feb. 16 Tuesday night study session for the town council's proposed water code described the mayor's attempts to justify the code in one brief sentence: "No matter how much lipstick you put on a pig, it's still a pig."

All things considered, the meeting went well, and the attendees were extremely civil, considering the volatility of the subject (government control and individual water rights). It was encouraging to see the attendance at the study session was standing room only (I think next time we need the high school auditorium). It was also encouraging to see that many of you brought the newspaper insert that Eric Owens and I co-authored – "Warning: Your Water and Water Rights are in Jeopardy". It was well worth the time, money, and lost sleep to know that there are still folks out there who believe that big government is not the best government and that those in power do not always have our best interests at heart. In fact, in most cases it's just the opposite.

As citizens, we have no way of knowing just how close we were to losing our freedoms. Only the town council and the mayor know the original planned implementation date of the code, and although I'm not accusing the town council of keeping this proposal under wraps, it certainly was not widely publicized as you would expect something of this magnitude to be. Everyone I spoke to was ignorant of its existence, and everyone was angry when they read it. (If you think I'm being an alarmist about the loss of personal rights, just read pages 28 and 34 of the proposal. You're gonna love it.) Had this bill passed, your right to water your own trees and your own garden from your own well could have been taken from you at the whim of the town manager or his designee.

Page 28 grants them absolute power over your water (both from exempt wells and municipal water). Read it yourself. Most people fall asleep before they get to this part, but I guarantee you'll stay awake after you've read it. I was hopeful after the mayor's opening comments at the Feb. 16 Tuesday night meeting, but by the end of the meeting, I was convinced that this was not oversight or fuzzy language. It's all about control and money. This proposal has been eighteen months in the making, and I just can't believe the language was unintentional. Read page 34 regarding civil penalties applying to well owners and decide for yourself. Remember: town politics bear a strong resemblance to a kitty litter box – you have to dig a little to find out where the smell is coming from. And this stinks.

Regardless of how it happened, the proposed code (or concept) is now out in full view, and the mayor and city council are aware that the citizens are awake. Unfortunately, I don't think the citizens are fully aware of how sinister this proposal really is (massive cost of a pipeline from Paulden, the intrusion upon our personal freedom, and the potential to multiply our city government and taxes exponentially). I urge you to visit the Del Rio website and see just how big this thing really is. This is one gift that just keeps on giving.

Where do we go from here?

1. Shred the proposal. At the start of Tuesday's meeting (Feb. 16), I thought the proposal could be saved, but I was wrong. The amount that is actually worth keeping would fit on a postage stamp with room left over. The good thing about it is that we get 40 pages that can be shredded and recycled as two ply. Now, who says rednecks don't believe in going green?
2. Our city can use its existing water and sewer connections to prove safe yield conditions without expanding its service area. It shouldn't require any high-paid consultants; I'm sure we have competent folks here in Chino. Speaking of which, twice now I have offered my services to Mayor Bunker to help rewrite this proposal for free, and both times I have been ignored. Not too often a taxpayer offers to take 6 weeks leave of absence from his work and provide his services without pay. Kind of makes you wonder what the ordinance is really about...
3. Pay attention to your town government. Actions speak louder than words, especially past actions. (Many thanks to the folks who brought up our present indebtedness due to the city pool and sewer system.)
4. Tell your neighbors and friends. It's surprising how many folks are still unaware of this proposed ordinance.
5. Encourage your fellow citizens to be water wise. It's not that difficult. We can do it without water Nazis. We really can.
6. Get on your computer and save the following websites to your "Favorites": [chinoaz.net](http://chinoaz.net) – here you can look at the town council agenda every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday – agendas are posted only 24 hours in advance, so set yourself a reminder. You are gonna love the way your money is being spent. You missed a really good one a couple weeks ago. [Delriodrilling.com](http://Delriodrilling.com) – Eric Owens of Del Rio Drilling is a tremendous source of information on water laws, aquifers, and water requirements for real-estate development. He has forgotten more about water laws than most politicians will ever know, and he believes that sewage effluent goes down, not up. Who would have dreamed of that?
7. Stay tuned on the legal battle over usage of our aquifer. We may be able to make some headway on this – Eric has some good ideas.

Now on a personal note – I wish to thank the folks who expressed their support and offered their services in this battle to keep our water rights.

Let me be perfectly clear – I have no political aspirations or political agenda other than personal freedom. I am uncomfortable in crowds, I hate meetings, and I despise politics. I'd rather have my head slammed in a car door than serve as a public official.

That being said, I think the only way to keep the government's hands out of our wallets and off of our water valves is to become active. If the citizens are willing, we just might keep this little corner of America free. If not, then we deserve the kind of government we allow.