

**Pima Association of Governments  
Resolution of Support**

**A Resolution Of The Pima Association Of Governments (PAG) To Support  
Volunteer and Community Efforts To Preserve Native Plant Species**

**Whereas**, the greater Tucson area is situated within the Sonoran desert, a unique and fragile environment that is home to a rich diversity of vegetation and wildlife,

**Whereas**, the natural environment of the Sonoran desert is populated by many species of vegetation, including cactus and succulent species that are not found elsewhere and which are integral to the human perception of the desert community.

**Whereas**, the population of Pima County has grown dramatically and is expected to reach 1.2 million by 2020,

**Whereas**, the anticipated population growth will, assuming current trends continue, result in the conversion of 160 square miles of natural desert lands into urban landscapes,

**Whereas**, the transformation of the desert into homes, stores and roads inevitably means a loss of desert habitat, especially in those areas where large areas are cleared for tract homes or commercial development.

**Whereas**, during the clearing of desert property for development, the loss of cactus, succulent and other valuable vegetation is nearly complete and irreversible,

Whereas, various local communities have established regulations to protect native plant species,

Whereas, the Town of Oro Valley has supported and encouraged their "Save-A-Plant" program which was recognized by the American Planning Association and received its Outstanding Planning Award for a Special Community Initiative in 2001,

**Whereas**, a volunteer community organization, the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society, a 501 c 3 organization, has organized a group of individuals for the purpose of "rescuing" cactus and succulent plants by removing them from lands which are about to be developed,

**Whereas**, since 1999, over 28,000 native plants have been "rescued" and provided with new homes throughout Southern Arizona,

**Whereas**, most developers are very supportive of the efforts made by the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society's Cactus Rescue Team and closely coordinate to allow the removal of plants so they may be reestablished,

**Whereas**, the loss of plants that could otherwise be ‘rescued’ represents a loss of plants, some of which are especially valuable by virtue of their age or other unique characteristics, that is unnecessary and could otherwise be avoided,

**Now, therefore**, be it resolved that:

The diminution of the desert environment through the loss of plants is a direct by-product of development that should be mitigated whenever possible,

The loss of native desert plants can be minimized through human intervention to remove and preserve those plants by relocation and replanting,

The Regional Council commends those local jurisdictions that have established programs that balance development with the need to preserve native plant species to the greatest extent possible,

The Regional Council commends and thanks the volunteers of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society’s Cactus Rescue Team for their selfless efforts to preserve plants that would otherwise be lost through development,

The Regional Council commends and thanks those members of the development community for their efforts to support the preservation of native plant species through the work of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society’s Cactus Rescue Team either directly or by allowing access to property and the removal of plants that would otherwise be lost,

The Regional Council calls upon every member of the development community to recognize the value of our desert environment and to engage in development practices which retain, wherever practicable, the greatest amount of natural desert lands,

The Regional Council encourages and supports the efforts of the Oro Valley Save-A-Plant program and the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society’s Cactus Rescue Team to “rescue” desert vegetation and encourages all members of the development community to cooperate with and, if possible, support their efforts to save natural desert vegetation from irreversible loss.

The Regional Council encourages its member jurisdictions to reflect on the potential loss of the desert environment as development progresses and to adopt policies and plans to ensure that future development will occur in a manner that preserves and is harmonious with native desert vegetation wherever practicable.

Adopted on September 28, 2006 by the PAG Regional Council