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## Scottsdale mulls water firm action

[Ari Cohn](#), Tribune

### ARIZONA AMERICAN WATER CO.

Craig Clifford, acting city treasurer and chief financial officer, said the council doesn't need to put any money behind the \$10 million Arizona American budget item, but the placeholder gives officials the legal authority to allocate that money and take action during the next fiscal year, if the need arises.

Arizona American customers may have been exposed to trichloroethylene, or TCE, levels on Jan. 16 at quadruple the maximum allowable limit because of a mechanical breakdown at Arizona American's Miller Road Treatment Facility in Scottsdale. The company had a previous TCE problem in October, but at the time officials said the tainted water was blended with TCE-free water, lowering concentrations to within federal limits.

Arizona American has since announced that the well linked to the TCE problems has been permanently disconnected. But city officials are considering options ranging from working more closely with the private utility to ensure safety to condemning the company's system and taking it over.

Clifford said the proposed budget item gives the city the flexibility to proceed with such things as an initial study to assess the cost of buying or condemning Arizona American's system, which serves about 12,000 people in Scottsdale and Paradise Valley. The council would have to approve any allocation, however, he said.

"This gives us the legal ability to proceed," Clifford said.

Councilman Bob Littlefield said the measure sends a message to Arizona American about the city's intention to deal with the problem.

"Just so we put everyone on notice that we are serious about this," he said.

Councilman Wayne Ecton agreed.

"We need to be prepared to move forward if we see fit to do so," he said.