



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Gail Griffin (R-19)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Joint House Hearing Finds Governor's Water Policy Directly Conflicts with Housing Affordability and Supply

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee (NREW) and the House Commerce Committee, both which deal with issues involving the critical issues of water and housing, held a special joint hearing on Tuesday to hear testimony from experts on the current state of water policy and its impact on housing supply and affordability in Arizona.

“Good news! Updated groundwater modeling conducted in 2024 shows Arizona has water. According to independent hydrologists at Matrix New World, the comprehensive groundwater model that was released in June 2023 does not actually describe the amount of groundwater that is available in the basin,” said Representative Gail Griffin, Chairwoman of the House Natural Resources, Energy, and Water Committee. **“The Arizona Department of Water Resources decided unilaterally to model certain wells under the assumption that they would be placed on the side of a mountain rather than in the heart of the aquifer. In addition, the June 2023 model substantially over-estimated groundwater demand while substantially under-estimating future supply to reflect current best practices in water management or the fact that it is currently illegal to build residential subdivisions in the Phoenix metropolitan area without replenishing groundwater.”**

“Clearly, this administration is targeting single-family homes and the American way of life,” said NREW Vice Chairman Austin Smith. **“Some members of the Governor's Water Policy Council have an issue with single-family homes and want to see future suburban development come to an end across the state. Governor Hobbs's water policy and moratorium on new housing development has effectively put urban growth boundaries around the largest cities in our state. These policies didn't work in states like Oregon and Washington and have only made housing affordability worse. What we're seeing is a rogue administration that is attempting to use the power of the executive branch to circumvent the legislature and implement illegal housing and population control in Arizona.”**

“Arizona is one of the fastest growing states in the nation and relies on new home construction to maintain an affordable housing supply and low-cost standard of living for millions of people,” said Commerce Committee Chairman Justin Wilmeth. **“Home ownership is also one of the most effective ways to build generational wealth and lift future generations out of poverty. Bad water policies that prevent the development of new homes directly conflicts with our ability to ensure that first-time homebuyers can purchase at a price that they can afford. If the Department doesn't change course, millions of people will be excluded from the opportunity to experience home ownership and be forced to pay rent forever.”**

“Arizona’s regulatory environment is premised on the foundation that a person who submits an application for a regulatory approval under one set of rules will be entitled to have their application reviewed under that same set of rules,” said Commerce Committee Vice Chairman Michael Carbone. **“Arizona water policy under the current administration, however, is the only place where the government has said that the rules can change at any time without notice, even if a developer has already submitted an application under the old set of rules. This is simply irresponsible – no matter how laudable the cause – and has impacted several major housing developers in Arizona who had invested hundreds of millions of dollars in capital improvements to bring thousands of new single-family homes online. These developers played by the rules and did everything they were supposed to do, yet they were denied due process of law in the handling of their applications. The Department must update the June 2023 groundwater model with the latest science and well placement data and lift the moratorium on new housing development without further delay.”**

Gail Griffin is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 19, which includes areas of Greenlee, Graham, Cochise, and eastern Pima and Santa Cruz Counties. Griffin chairs the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee and is co-chair of the Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Study Committee on Water Security.

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