



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Gail Griffin (R-19)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Hobbs Vetoes Local Control for the Douglas Active Management Area

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Arizona State Representative Gail Griffin, Chair of the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee, introduced [House Bill 2089](#) to allow residents of any voter-established Active Management Area (AMA)—including the Douglas AMA—to reconsider its designation after ten years.

In 2022, residents of the Douglas groundwater basin voted to designate it as an AMA, voluntarily imposing new groundwater requirements on themselves. Although Bisbee residents—who get their drinking water from the Upper San Pedro basin via a 6.4-mile pipeline and are not affected by Douglas groundwater use—were allowed to vote, the election was certified, and the AMA was established in Douglas.

Now, some residents are beginning to rethink their decision. The City of Bisbee, which has plans to grow, is facing challenges that could prevent it from growing. Meanwhile, other residents are realizing that Active Management Areas do not deliver all the promises that were made when petition circulators first came to the community. Unfortunately, once an Active Management Area is established, there is no undoing it. Current law does not allow local voters to reconsider the question in a future election.

“If local voters put in the regulations, then local voters should be able to reconsider the regulations. That is the essence of local control,” said Representative Griffin.

HB2089 would have updated the existing AMA statutes to allow residents to resubmit the question after ten years, balancing the need to give residents a say in the management of local groundwater resources with the need to give the aquifer a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate real improvements. Generally, it takes anywhere from five to ten years to see the benefits of local conservation measures reflected in the data. Representative Griffin adopted the ten-year timeframe in HB2089 out of respect for this delay.

Governor Katie Hobbs vetoed the legislation, calling it a “pointless, trivial” change.

“If the Governor believes in local control, she needs to let the people decide,” Representative Griffin said. **“True local control requires giving people the right to vote, including the opportunity to reconsider their decision in the future.”**

HB2089 was introduced as a part of a broader effort to make AMAs [more workable](#) for rural areas and [increase local control](#)—including legislation would have given Douglas groundwater users final say over the local management goal and plan—but the Governor [vetoed that effort as well](#).

“The Governor clearly does not understand local control or represent rural Arizona,” said Representative Griffin.

In Willcox, residents overwhelmingly rejected the establishment of an AMA, but Governor Hobbs ignored the election result and directed her water agency to impose it anyway—demonstrating her contempt for local control and willingness to override the will of the people.

Now, the Governor is pushing [“mandatory conservation requirements, including volumetric groundwater reductions”](#) in Willcox in order to achieve a “50% reduction in overdraft by 2075,” or 50% over 50 years.

“What the Governor wants is a framework that imposes [more restrictions](#) on rural Arizona than exist in urban areas like Phoenix and Tucson,” said Representative Griffin. **“These objectives are not realistic and would [devastate rural economies](#).”**

Arizona House and Senate Republicans have rejected the Governor’s approach, instead supporting solutions that reflect rural realities, protect local industries like agriculture, energy, and wine production, secure [critical groundwater data](#), and address challenges being faced by [domestic well owners](#).

“Republicans are [advancing solutions](#) to protect Arizona’s water, including tools to stop the expansion of groundwater pumping, stabilize existing groundwater levels, and put more water into the aquifer through [groundwater conservation](#) and [stormwater recharge](#). We stand with our rural communities and remain committed to local control.”

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. She also serves as Chairman of the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee.

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