



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives
Majority Whip Julie Willoughby (R-13)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rep. Willoughby: Trump Administration Air Quality Ruling Gives Arizona Chance to End Costly Boutique Gas Blend

With new federal support and favorable modeling in hand, Governor Hobbs should move now to cut fuel costs for Arizonans

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Arizona House Majority Whip Julie Willoughby today praised a Trump Administration decision issued last week recognizing the impact of international emissions on Arizona’s ability to meet federal air quality standards and granting the Phoenix metropolitan area relief from stricter federal requirements.

The decision opens the door for Arizona to challenge the costly boutique summer gasoline blend required in Maricopa and Pinal counties, which drives up fuel costs for Arizona families every year.

For months, Majority Whip Willoughby has been working with local and federal officials to pursue long-term reforms to Arizona’s expensive fuel requirements. In January, she sent a letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to initiate discussions on permanent changes that would lower costs while maintaining compliance with federal air quality standards.

“The main reason drivers in Maricopa and Pinal counties pay more for gas in the summer is that these areas are forced to use a special boutique blend made only for Arizona,” said Majority Whip Willoughby. **“It costs more to produce, limits supply, and leaves our state more vulnerable to price spikes. The question is whether this requirement is still doing anything meaningful to improve air quality. If it is not, then Arizona families are being forced to pay more for little to no benefit.”**

“Industry is cleaner today than it was when Arizona’s blend was last updated, and fuel standards nationwide have changed significantly since then,” Willoughby continued. **“There is a strong possibility Arizona can move to a lower-cost fuel option without sacrificing air quality. If the evidence supports that conclusion, we should act immediately.”**

To push the issue forward, Majority Whip Willoughby introduced a [package of five measures](#), including HB 2400 to [suspend the state’s 18-cent gas tax](#) on summer fuel in Maricopa and Pinal counties; HB 2401 to require the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to regularly review lower-cost fuel options that still meet federal standards; HB 2696 to direct the Arizona Commerce Authority to prioritize the study of alternative fuel blends and gas prices over the next two years; and HB 2955 to require Arizona to immediately switch to a lower-cost blend once the EPA approves a change to the state’s air quality implementation plan.

“In order to change the blend, Arizona must submit a request to the EPA to revise our State Implementation Plan and show that we can still meet federal air quality standards with the new blend,” said Majority Whip Willoughby. **“The modeling used to make that demonstration must take into account the fact that a major share of the emissions affecting our state comes from outside our borders and is beyond Arizona’s control. The Trump Administration’s recent decision recognizing international transport acknowledges this impact and gives Arizona more room to reevaluate whether our current fuel requirements are still justified. With the federal government signaling openness, this may be our best and only opportunity to get this done.”**

In February, Majority Whip Willoughby asked the Maricopa Association of Governments to begin modeling whether Arizona could switch from its current boutique gasoline blend, with a Reid Vapor Pressure of 7.0 pounds per square inch, to a more widely available and lower-cost blend with an RVP of 7.4.

That preliminary modeling, completed in March, found that the switch would increase the maximum ozone concentration in the relevant Phoenix metropolitan area between zero and 0.01 parts per billion, depending on which model is used.

“That is a negligible impact and more than enough reason to move this conversation forward,” said Majority Whip Willoughby. **“Just as important, Governor Hobbs’ administration already has these results. MAG provided the modeling to her Department of Environmental Quality, which means the Governor could begin acting on this now if she wanted to. She does not need to wait. She does not need more excuses. If Governor Hobbs is serious about lowering fuel costs, she should direct her agency to act immediately.”**

“The modeling is favorable. The facts are lining up in Arizona’s favor. We should seize this opportunity and make the case for lasting gas affordability now,” Willoughby said.

A copy of Majority Whip Willoughby’s original February letter to the Maricopa Association of Governments is attached and can be found here: <https://bit.ly/4tf1XcK>

A copy of the association’s preliminary modeling results, provided in response to her request, is attached and can be found here: <https://bit.ly/4dRbkLh>

A copy of Majority Whip Willoughby’s follow-up letter regarding next steps is attached and can be found here: <https://bit.ly/4v1pDDm>

Julie Willoughby is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 13 in Chandler, Gilbert, and Sun Lakes. She also serves as the House Majority Whip. Follow her on X at @JWilloughbyAZ.

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