



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona State Legislature

Representative Gail Griffin (R-19)

Senator Tim Dunn (R-25)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Land Oversight Committee to Examine State Trust Land Sales for Housing

September 29 hearing will examine legislative requirements, agency permitting delays, and residential development during severe housing shortage, among other issues

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The newly formed Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee on State Land Oversight will hold its [first meeting on Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in House Hearing Room 1](#). The committee is expected to hear from the Arizona State Land Department and the Homebuilders Association of Central Arizona.

The Department will provide an update on requirements the Legislature adopted as part of the agency's four-year continuation. These include the creation of a five-year disposition plan and written policies governing commissioner-initiated sales. The Department was also required to work with stakeholders to establish timeframes for issuing final written decisions on applications for permits, certificates, approvals, registrations, charters, and other permissions issued by the agency.

"During our sunset review, we heard about a backlog of more than 400 pending applications that was continuing to grow, with some applications sitting for more than two years without a final approval or denial on the merits," said Senator Tim Dunn, Senate Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee. **"This was one of the top concerns raised by stakeholders. Nearly every industry that does business with the Department and that generates revenue for the Trust reported negative experiences with the Department's secret 'A.S.A.P.' process—where applications go in and, instead of being approved or denied on the merits, they get sidelined indefinitely under the guise of 'needing more information' when Department staff, the Governor, or her political allies have a different, predetermined vision for a parcel. This practice avoids appealable agency actions under Arizona Revised Statutes 37-133 and denies applicants' basic due process rights. It is unacceptable, unlawful, and must be addressed."**

"Arizona is in a housing crisis," said Representative Griffin, House Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee. **"In 2023, Arizona was more than 50,000 units short. Since then, the shortage has only grown while demand for new housing has remained steady, driving up housing costs for both renters and prospective buyers. The shortage is also delaying family formation, with fewer young people starting families because they cannot afford the cost of living or find an affordable starter home. The national average age for first-time home buyers is now 40 years old, the oldest on record. For someone taking out a 30-year mortgage at that age, that means making payments until age 70."**

“The family formation issue is also affecting school enrollment, leading to declining numbers and increased school closures as fewer families have kids. According to the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, the state’s birth rate declined 36 percent from 2007-2022, the second highest in the nation. The future of Arizona’s education system depends on educational leaders supporting new home construction in affordable markets to foster an economic environment that supports family formation. If there are no kids to enroll, then there is no need for a school.

“In 2025, we learned from the Arizona Common Sense Institute that over 200,000 acres of potentially developable State Trust Land are located within a 10-mile radius of existing urban areas, which could support new home construction. The State Land Department under the direction of the Governor maintains direct control over these acres and over the decision whether to auction them for residential purposes or to keep them off the market for other reasons.

“Market data show that auctioning fewer acres per auction for land near or within cities results in a greater number of competitive bids and in a higher return for the Trust relative to large-acre deals and outlying parcels that lack existing infrastructure or that require higher upfront capital commitments, which serve as barriers to entry. With Arizona facing this kind of housing shortage, and education being a top issue for the state, we need to know how many of those acres located in or near city limits were auctioned for residential purposes for the benefit of the Trust.”

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.

Tim Dunn is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 25, which includes portions of Yuma, Maricopa, and La Paz Counties. Follow him on X/Twitter at @TimDunn_AZ.

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