



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Gail Griffin (R-19)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Tuesday, September 29, 2026
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

During Housing Shortage, Hobbs Administration Auctioned 22 Times More State Trust Land for Solar Than Housing

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee on State Land Oversight this week held its first hearing on outstanding issues with the Arizona State Land Department and asked critical questions related to the sale of State Trust Land near urban areas for the purpose of residential housing development for the benefit of the Trust.

According to the [Common Sense Institute](#), Arizona is short approximately 56,000 housing units and has a long-term cumulative deficit between 110,000 and 121,000 homes. The shortage has resulted in higher housing costs, reduced jobs in construction and trades, increased rates of homelessness and evictions, and delayed family formation for young professionals who cannot find or afford a basic starter home.

Meanwhile, the Common Sense Institute found in 2025 that there are about 276,000 acres of potentially developable State Trust land located within 10 miles of existing urban areas, presenting a potential avenue for relief.

The same year, however, members of the Arizona State Legislature discovered that the Department maintains a “Solar Scores Map” that identifies parcels of State Trust Land that the Department believes are “best” for utility-scale solar development. Many of the parcels that the Department indicated as “best” for solar, however, happen to be many of the same parcels that the Common Sense Institute identified for potential new home construction: close to existing urban areas, and parcels that homebuilders would typically bid on to construct new housing supply.

Considering the clear and apparent conflict in potential land uses, the members of the Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee pressed the agency for transparency and asked tough questions regarding the public auctions the Department held in Fiscal Year 2026, including the number of auctions, acres, and bids for housing and the number of auctions, acres, and bids for solar during the same period.

Based on their review, the Committee found the following evidence (reflected in the table below):

Arizona State Land Department FY26 Public Auctions: Residential Housing vs Utility-Scale Solar					
	Number of Auctions (County)	Amount of Revenue	Number of Acres	Average Price Per Acre	Average Number of Bids per Auction
For Residential	2	\$181,320,000	307	\$356,646	215
	Desert Ridge (Maricopa)	\$180,000,000	293	\$613,292	428
	KB Homes (Pima)	\$1,320,000	13	\$100,000	1
For Solar	7	\$52,663,295	6,704	\$8,124	1
	San Rafael Energy Park (Cochise)	\$6,900,000	1,061	\$6,501	1
	Sun Basin Solar (Maricopa)	\$7,250,000	1,097	\$6,608	1
	Sun Basin Solar (Maricopa)	\$12,275,000	974	\$12,596	1
	Arlington Valley Solar (Maricopa)	\$6,375,000	561	\$11,362	1
	Dandelion Energy Park (Maricopa)	\$8,760,505	1,348	\$6,500	1
	Dandelion Energy Park (Maricopa)	\$6,802,000	1,000	\$6,799	1
	Hashknife Energy Center (Navajo)	\$4,300,790	662	\$6,500	1

Source: [Arizona State Land Department Auction Results: FY 2017 to Date](#)

“In FY26, the Hobbs Administration auctioned over 6,700 acres of State Trust Land to solar but only 300 acres for residential purposes,” said Representative Gail Griffin, House Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee and Chair of the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee. **“During a housing shortage, the Department auctioned nearly 22 times the number of acres of State Trust Land for utility-scale solar development than for new home construction. That was seven auctions for solar but only two for homes: more than three times as many for solar as for new home construction. I also think it’s interesting that five of those seven solar leases were located in Maricopa County—the same county where the Governor issued a housing moratorium that illegally halted nearly 162,000 Phoenix-area homes planned for State Trust Land.”**

“The Department also testified that there are approximately 150 solar applications currently pending and that approximately 20 percent of those are currently ‘moving through the process,’” continued Representative Griffin. **“If all 20 percent of those go to auction, then that would be 30 more solar leases in FY27. At about 1,000 acres per auction, which has been the trend, that’s 30,000 acres of State Trust Land going for solar next year. Meanwhile, the Department said it was planning only 7,200 acres for residential in FY27, four times less. I see a move to tie up land for 30 years with solar that prevents new home construction and drives up land and housing prices within the cities. The future of Arizona’s affordable standard of living and ability to start new families is on the line.”**

“Assuming 5 units per acre, those 6,704 acres that went to solar could have supported at least 33,500 new homes, which would have reduced our housing shortage by more than half,” said Representative Chris Lopez, Vice Chair of the House Natural Resources, Energy & Water Committee. **“Despite the Governor’s clear preference for solar, homebuilders still brought in nearly 44 times as much value for the beneficiaries of the Trust per acre as utility-scale solar, with residential bringing in nearly \$357,000 per acre but solar delivering only \$8,124 per acre. Let that sink in. Homebuilding brought in more than three times the value of solar with nearly 22 times less land.”**

“I appreciate the direction that Commissioner has taken to reform procedures at the Department, but I am concerned of all the auctions the Department held in FY26 for commercial solar leases, *all* had only ONE bidder,” said Representative Sylvia Allen. **“That’s 100 percent of all the solar leases the Department issued in FY26 had no competition, no competing bidder, and no increase in final price for the beneficiaries of the Trust. On all those leases, the final winning price was the same as the minimum starting price. Meanwhile, the sole residential land sale that the Department held in Maricopa County commanded over 400 bids and saw its final purchase price increase by over 66 percent over the minimum starting price, from \$108.3 million to \$180 million. The pattern of single bidders on auctions the Department holds for utility-scale solar purposes raises questions about whether the Trust could have received more revenue had other industries—such as homebuilders—been allowed to compete. Blanketing our state with 30-year leases of solar and wind will lead to unintended consequences that will hurt 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.

###