



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives
Representative Alexander Kolodin (R-3)
1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Wednesday, March 22, 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Democrats Unsuccessfully Oppose Brief Extension to HB 2561 Reconsideration Deadline, as Community’s Continued Pleas to Legislature to Stop Playing Politics with Water Await a Response

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – A statement from State Representative Alexander Kolodin:

Last week, I engaged in three days of talks with fellow members of the legislature, the City of Scottsdale, and Maricopa County over the Rio Verde Foothills water crisis. Solving the problem took two hours, the rest was spent in negotiations with Democrats, who have made 750 households’ access to water contingent on other policy demands.

First, let me talk about the solution that was so simple to reach. Maricopa County’s dealbreaker is that it does not want to be in the water business. Scottsdale’s dealbreaker is that it wants a governmental entity to sign an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with it. But since, as talks revealed, Scottsdale does not care if that entity is the county, the legislature can simply revise my bill, [HB 2561](#), to create a new entity, called a standpipe district, to enter into an IGA with cities like Scottsdale. A standpipe district would be voluntary to join, temporary, and would exist only to enter into an IGA, contract with a third-party billing and payment processor, and make sure that water supplied through Scottsdale’s system was hauled only to member households. Everyone can live with this solution – the county and the city both. This requires legislation that can easily be integrated into HB 2561.

But now the politics. This bill needs to pass with an emergency clause to take effect immediately. That means it needs Democrats. But Democrats have made their support for the bill contingent on a significant impairment on the rights of small landowners. Essentially, they want to force citizens to engage in a lengthy bureaucratic process to build a single additional house on their own property, even for your own children.

Democrats claim, with some justification, that wildcat development contributed to the Rio Verde Foothills water crisis and couch their radical policy proposal as simply closing the “wildcat loophole.” But no such loophole exists. Wildcat development is when a homebuilder builds more than five homes without complying with the subdivision laws of the state. This happened repeatedly in Rio Verde, but it is already illegal. In fact, the Arizona Department of Real Estate has referred several wildcat developers to the Arizona Attorney General’s office, which have been

met with silence. Republicans have offered to add additional teeth to Arizona's existing prohibition on this already illegal behavior to address the Democrats' concerns but, so far, this reasonable counterproposal has been met with silence. Meanwhile the people of Rio Verde suffer. Children go unbathed, people and animals make do with increasingly dwindling supplies of water. In their desperation, one Rio Verde rancher has taken to building a processing plant to squeeze water out of horse manure. But conservation can only take this community so far – summer is coming. When it comes to water, the time to put politics aside was yesterday.

That is why today I am moving for a brief extension to the reconsideration deadline for HB 2561 – through April 5 – to allow talks to conclude, and in the hopes that we can come together as Arizonans to address our state's most pressing need before 750 Arizona families run out of time. Our state is counting on us.

Alexander Kolodin is an attorney and Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 3, which includes North Scottsdale, Fountain Hills, and Rio Verde in Maricopa County. Follow him on Twitter at @Alex4Arizona.

###