



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

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1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Tuesday, April 15, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Hobbs has an Opportunity to Sign the Only Bills that Address Domestic Wells

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – In rural Arizona, shallow domestic wells—typically between 100 and 300 feet deep—are going dry. Governor Katie Hobbs has an opportunity to take immediate action by signing three bills that directly address this growing crisis and provide safe, reliable, long-term water access for rural residents.

The following bills work together to solve both sides of the rural water supply equation:

- [HB2086](#) (water improvements program; water hauling) (Griffin) provides funds to low- and fixed-income residents to purchase and install storage tanks that can be used to receive water by truck (also known as water hauling) when private wells go dry.
- [SB1444](#) (NOW: domestic water improvement districts; hauling) (Griffin) allows Domestic Water Improvement Districts (also known as DWIDs) in the Willcox and Douglas Active Management Areas to be established for the purpose of constructing a single well and standpipe for the purpose of providing water to communities.
- [HB2274](#) (NOW: water improvement district; Willcox basin) (Griffin) allows the residents of Sunsites, Sunizona, and other areas on the Cochise County side of the Willcox groundwater basin to vote to establish a DWID, providing a source of water for local residents facing challenges with domestic wells.

Combined, these bills address both ends of supply and demand equation in rural areas and are the only bills that have been introduced that [address domestic wells](#). SB1444 addresses the supply side by ensuring that a well of sufficient depth can be constructed to support water hauling, while HB2086 addresses the demand side by ensuring that residents have the storage tanks they need to receive hauled water. HB2274 ties it all together by putting both ends of the supply and demand equation into action in the Willcox basin.

Without these solutions, residents are left with few options to obtain certainty and peace of mind when domestic wells run dry, which include drilling new wells or deepening existing wells at substantial cost. These options are untenable for many rural residents, as many rural residents are on low- to moderate- incomes and fixed-incomes and cannot afford to drill a deeper well.

Some residents, in desperation, have turned to lobbying the government to pass laws that would force other water users to cut back, believing that groundwater levels might increase if other users used less.

These beliefs, however, are not consistent with science (as it could take years to see results after legislation is passed), and radical environmentalist proposals (such as the Environmental Defense Fund's "[Rural Groundwater](#)

[Management Act](#)“ concept, which requires up to 40 percent mandatory reductions over 40 years), would not provide the immediate relief that residents are expecting nor prevent additional wells from going dry.

Such legislation would, however, [devastate rural economies](#) and reduce the funds that would be available to local residents to help address domestic wells, while also reducing local property tax bases to local governments and eliminating jobs for working families. No amount of mandatory groundwater reductions will be sufficient to appease the radical Left or provide the immediate relief that domestic well owners want.

While according to the Department of Water Resources, at least 71 wells have gone dry in the Willcox basin over the last ten years, the recently designated Willcox Active Management Area (which voters resoundingly rejected in 2022, and which seeks to achieve a [50% reduction in the basin over 50 years](#) through “volumetric reductions” on certain “user classes”) will not address these wells or prevent additional wells from going dry.

Just because a person drills a well does not guarantee the person will get water. It depends on where one drills. But if rural residents come together as a community to establish a DWID for the purpose of constructing a common well and standpipe for water hauling, then they can invest strategically in the location that makes the most sense in the basin.

Solutions like HB2086, SB1444, and HB2274 will help to provide solutions to the challenges that many domestic well owners are facing.

Overall, water hauling is a popular and acceptable way to receive water, allowing residents to maintain a rural lifestyle without having to be physically connected to a municipal system. Many residents—from multi-million-dollar properties in Flagstaff to tribal members on the Navajo Nation—utilize hauled water to receive drinking water in rural areas.

Arizona state lawmakers are [working on solutions](#) to address groundwater in rural Arizona, including bills that [conserve water](#), increase [local control](#), make existing tools [more workable](#) for rural areas, obtain [critical data](#), increase [groundwater recharge](#), and support [affordable housing](#). But, working on additional, more expansive legislation takes time.

Currently, supporting the use of water hauling through the provision of storage tanks and the establishment of DWIDs—as HB2086, SB1444, and HB2274 do—is the most timely and cost effective way to ensure that local residents have the safe and reliable supply of water they need while lawmakers continue to work on additional legislation for rural groundwater basins.

If Governor Hobbs signs these bills, she will be taking action to provide an immediate solution for residents facing challenges with domestic wells as lawmakers continue to work with stakeholders and the Governor on additional groundwater legislation, allowing residents not to have to go another year drilling deeper wells or being forced to make decisions about the area they love.

Governor Hobbs has an opportunity to address domestic wells immediately. All she has to do is sign HB2086, SB1444, and HB2274.

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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