

Water for Arizona Coalition

SB 2895 Factsheet (subsequent irrigation non-expansion areas)

February 14, 2020

The Water for Arizona Coalition supports SB 2895 that reforms Subsequent Irrigation Non-Expansion Areas in Arizona.

- The Water for Arizona Coalition (WAC) supports making the Irrigation Non-Expansion Area (INA) statute more useful to communities as a water planning tool by allowing ADWR to consider reasonable future, projected water use in making determinations on new INAs
- The ability to plan for the future is a core element of smart water planning that has helped build Arizona's reputation as a leader in water management. Yet, many of our rural communities do not have forward-looking water planning tools available to them
- The ability to form an Irrigation Non-Expansion Area has essentially been an underutilized tool for communities to manage their groundwater sustainably, because the Department's hands are tied in only being able to consider current use of groundwater, and not projected future scenarios.
- Current statute only allows for “reactive” management, instead of “proactive” management. The problem has to already exist before management actions can be taken. Changing the statute would allow for communities to prevent harmful depletion of precious groundwater resources.
- There has not been a new INA in Arizona since the early 1980s, when INAs were first established in law. Some communities have attempted to establish new INAs, such as in San Simone and in Mohave County, yet their efforts to use the tool to support smart and forward looking water planning have been unsuccessful in part because the INA statute does not permit consideration of reasonable future use. In other words, a new INA cannot be implemented until depletion and over use of water is already locked in, rendering the tool useless for local communities that are seeking to secure their water supplies and ensure they have an economic future.
- Local communities need more tools, authorities, and science from the state in order to do smart water planning and ensure they have an economic future. Adjusting the INA statute to make the tool more useful for locally-driven water planning is positive step toward supporting rural communities and preserving Arizona's rural heritage.

The Water for Arizona Coalition is a community of Arizonans who support innovative practices and smart policies to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state's needs. Organizational support is provided by solution-oriented groups like American Rivers, Audubon Arizona, Business for Water Stewardship, Environmental Defense Action Fund, and Western Resource Advocates that collectively have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts across the state. Kevin Moran, a longtime Arizonan and former government relations consultant, is the Chairman of the Coalition.

