

February 6, 2023

The Honorable Katie Hobbs
Governor
Arizona State Capitol Complex
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Warren Petersen
President
Arizona Senate, Rm. 205
Arizona State Capitol Complex
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Raquel Terán
Minority Leader
Arizona Senate, Rm. 213
Arizona State Capitol Complex
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Ben Toma
Speaker of the House
Arizona House of Representatives, Rm. 223
Arizona State Capitol Complex
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

The Honorable Andrés Cano
Minority Leader
Arizona House of Representatives, Rm. 320
Arizona State Capitol Complex
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Members of the Legislature
Arizona State Capitol Complex
1700 W. Washington St.
Phoenix, AZ 85007

RE: Support for SB 1306 and HB 2731, Local Groundwater Stewardship Areas

Dear Governor Hobbs, President Petersen, Speaker Toma, Minority Leader Terán, Minority Leader Cano, and Members of the Arizona Legislature:

Our volunteer rural stakeholder working group came together to facilitate discussion of groundwater concerns in rural Arizona and develop ideas for more options and solutions to address the varied and unique groundwater challenges facing more and more rural communities. We met regularly over the past year developing and refining ideas, considering multiple and diverse perspectives, from Kingman to Willcox, from Pine to Vicksburg.

We write to express our full support for Senate Bill 1306 and HB 2731, Local Groundwater Stewardship Areas, introduced by Senator Borrelli and Representative Biasiucci. We are grateful for Senator Borrelli's and Rep. Biasiucci's leadership on rural water issues. We urge the Legislature to pass these bills and we ask Governor Hobbs to sign them.

Stewardship Areas will provide rural communities with much-needed new funding and an opt-in, locally-adaptable approach to groundwater management that puts local communities in the driver's seat of our water future. We believe this approach provides balance, provides value for rural economic sectors including agriculture, and will help ensure stability for our communities, farms, businesses, and way of life.

Our communities have seen first-hand what happens when our groundwater supplies dwindle, our wells run dry and our drinking water and local food supply is put at risk. We can no longer be forced to choose between unlimited pumping of groundwater, often our only water supply, and rigid Active Management Areas that were originally intended for urban, central Arizona.

Stewardship Areas give us a new alternative, one that empowers local communities with choice, while ensuring transparency and accountability on the local level and through the Arizona Department of Water Resources. Through this innovative approach, we can tailor groundwater protection to best fit our local needs and goals, supported by technical experts.

We ask for your support, for our communities, for Arizona.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Travis Lingenfelter
Mohave County

Supervisor Patrice Horstman
Coconino County

Supervisor Harry Oberg
Yavapai County

Vice Mayor Austin Aslan
City of Flagstaff

Phil Goode
Mayor of Prescott
Chairman, Northern Arizona
Municipal Water Users Association

Chris Ray
Pine/ Strawberry, Arizona

Kim Vacariu
San Simon Basin

Jamie Kelley
General Counsel
Mohave County Water Authority

Ron Doba
Northern Arizona Municipal
Water Users Association

Haley Paul
Policy Director
Audubon Society

Alan Davis
AZ Council of Trout Unlimited

Supervisor Donna Michaels
Yavapai County

Supervisor Holly Irwin
La Paz County

Mayor Clarinda Vail
Town of Tusayan

Mayor Ken Watkins
City of Kingman

Mark Spencer
Willcox Basin

Steve Kisiel
Willcox Basin

Tom Prezelski
Rural Arizona Action

Jen Pelz
Water Advocacy Director
Grand Canyon Trust

Christopher Kuzdas
Water for Arizona Coalition

Jocelyn Gibbon
Freshwater Policy Consulting

cc: The Honorable Leo Biasiucci
cc: The Honorable Sonny Borrelli