

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Joint Statement from County Officials Regarding Scheduled  
Groundwater Hearing in Willcox, Arizona**

*Coconino County Supervisor Patrice Horstman, La Paz County Supervisor Holly Irwin, Mohave County Supervisor Travis Lingenfelter, and Yavapai County Supervisor Donna Michaels*

**(PHOENIX— September, 24 2024)** From 2016 to 2023, every legislative session has seen Mohave County legislators, with the support of our four Boards of Supervisors, as well as cities, towns, and an increasing number of rural communities and stakeholders across unprotected rural Arizona, introduced balanced and fair rural groundwater management legislation aimed at protecting rural basins deemed to be at-risk based on the best available hydrology and groundwater modeling data. Unfortunately, not a single hearing was granted in Representative Griffin’s committee in that time.

Had we moved forward, rural Arizona’s groundwater story would be far better positioned today. We commend the Arizona Department of Water Resources (DWR) for continuing to publish mandatory supply and demand reports for every groundwater basin in Arizona. Their efforts to initiate discussions, this Thursday, on protections for the Willcox Basin as one of the rural basins most at risk of future public health crisis due to water shortages is essential.

It is long past time for the Arizona Legislature to approve a balanced, commonsense, and customizable rural management framework to protect the water future of our rural Arizona communities—most who have no other options to round out their water portfolios. Our non-partisan and unwavering goal is to ensure that rural Arizona groundwater remains available and affordable for as long as possible, safeguarding the water supplies of future generations of rural Arizonans.

We must act now to preserve the groundwater supplies of our rural Arizona communities, protect our rural property values, and ensure our local economies continue to thrive by passing a new commonsense, customizable, and equitable rural groundwater management framework tool.

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