

## News Release

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### Contacts:

Sandy Bahr, Sierra Club - Grand Canyon Chapter: (602) 999-5790, [sandy.bahr@sierraclub.org](mailto:sandy.bahr@sierraclub.org)  
Yara Marin, Interior West Regional Director, Vote Solar: (602) 492-6077, [Yara@votesolar.org](mailto:Yara@votesolar.org)

### **Groups Release Environmental Priorities for Arizona Legislature and Governor Endorsed by 42 Organizations**

(Phoenix, AZ) - Today, 42 environmental, climate, faith, and community groups (see full list below) released the [2023 Environmental Priorities for the Arizona Legislature and Governor](#). Priorities focus on critical areas and needed actions for Arizona on climate change, water, democracy, environmental justice, and land protection and restoration, among other issues.

“By putting water sustainability, climate resiliency, and environmental justice on the back burner, the previous governor and legislatures have harmed our communities, hurt us economically, and impacted our health and welfare,” said **Sandy Bahr, Director for Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon (Arizona) Chapter**. “This year, we have an opportunity to turn that around and make these issues priorities at every level of government. We ask Governor Hobbs and the Arizona Legislature to advance policies to put Arizona on track with environmental justice and protection, and ensure our planning and implementation provide a sustainable and resilient future for Arizona.”

The groups ask the Arizona Legislature to pass and for Governor Hobbs to sign bills that measure and limit groundwater pumping throughout our state, especially outside active management areas and in areas where it is affecting our river flows. Rather than merely pursuing importing water from outside Arizona, we ask that our leaders help slow down and stop the effort to guarantee a single-source pipeline of very expensive desalinated water from the Gulf of California in Mexico with potential significant harmful impacts. Instead, we ask our leaders to examine the sustainability of the current growth and development patterns, current agricultural practices, and opportunities for deeper conservation practices.

“As people of faith and conscience we are called to be stewards of God’s Creation,” said **Melanie Beikman, Executive Director, Arizona Interfaith Power & Light**. “The climate crisis we face is not just an environmental, political or economic issue. Caring for Arizona’s air, water and land, and protecting the vulnerable from environmental destruction is a moral and spiritual imperative. We urge Governor Hobbs and the Arizona Legislature to act on these environmental priorities with urgency and boldness.”

“People of Color are disproportionately and negatively impacted by air and water pollution, the climate crisis, and other environmental harms,” said **Vania Guevara, Advocacy Deputy Director for Chispa Arizona**. “It is time for organized action to ensure that all state agencies and other public bodies involved in decisions that affect environmental quality adopt and implement environmental-justice policies that provide meaningful opportunities for involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, gender, religion, income, or education level and that limit harm to overburdened communities.”

“Arizona voters sent a clear message that they want leaders who understand climate change and will work together for clean air, water security, and an accelerated transition to a clean energy economy,”

said **Nick Arnold, Arizona State Lead with Climate Cabinet Action**. “Against a backdrop of rising fossil energy costs and the escalating effects of extreme heat and drought, Climate Cabinet Action is eager to work with Arizona leaders to implement common sense clean energy solutions that will help lower costs for Arizona families and help our state prosper.”

“Arizonans already suffer from the increasing temperatures, water and air pollution, and the impact on our health. Clean energy has the power to drive down energy costs while addressing climate change,” said **Yara Marin, Interior West Regional Director at Vote Solar**. “We hope that the Arizona Legislature and our Governor will work closely to advance policies that put our people and communities first.”

“We, as diverse faith communities of all religions, an interfaith partnership in Arizona, come together to support the Environmental Priorities 2023. In collaboration with our partners from diverse organizations, we are dedicated to making the Environmental Priorities 2023 a concrete reality. We, not only serve as individual faith communities working independently, but we serve, with all religious diversities, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Bahais, Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, working together. We work across interfaith to build the journey to environmental sustainability,” said **Vasu Bandu, Faith Community Coordinator, Arizona Faith Network**.

Bandu continued, “We ask the Arizona Legislature and Governor to ensure access to democracy for all, the freedom to vote for all citizens. The democratic process must reflect and empower our diverse electorate. People of color must feel safe and welcome. We ask for free and fair elections.”

“The office of Senator Juan Mendez stands committed to the values and people that protect our air, water, and other natural resources and calls on the legislature to pass bills and policy that would protect these resources like Arizona climate resiliency planning group or a amendment that would add the right to a clean environment to the state constitution,” said **Senator Juan Mendez, Arizona Legislative District 8**.

**A livestream of the news conference can be found here:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/sierraclubaz/videos/848714716404905>**

**You can read the Environmental Priorities [here](#).**

**Supporters of the 2023 Environmental Priorities include the following groups:**

1. Arizona Climate Action Coalition – Hazel Chandler
2. Arizona Faith Network
3. Arizona Heritage Alliance
4. Arizona Interfaith Power & Light
5. Arizona Preservation Foundation
6. Arizonans for Community Choice
7. Black Canyon Heritage Park
8. Casas Adobes Congregational, United Church of Christ
9. Central United Methodist Church
10. Chalice Christian Church, Gilbert
11. Chispa Arizona
12. Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Arizona

13. Church of the Painted Hills, United Church of Christ
14. Climate Cabinet Action
15. Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
16. Dayspring United Methodist Church
17. Defend Our Future Arizona
18. Elders Climate Action – Arizona Chapter
19. Episcopal Diocese of Arizona
20. First Church UCC
21. Foothills Christian Church
22. Granite Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation
23. Great Old Broads for Wilderness
24. Kids' Climate Action Network
25. MARBE SA
26. MKS Imaging Technology, LLC
27. Moms Clean Air Force – Arizona Chapter
28. Physicians for Social Responsibility – Arizona Chapter
29. Prescott College, Tucson
30. Shepherd of the Hills, United Church of Christ
31. Sierra Club – Grand Canyon Chapter
32. St. Mark's Presbyterian Church
33. Sustainable Water Network
34. Tó Nizhóní Aní
35. Tucson Audubon Society
36. Tucson Climate Coalition
37. Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona (UUJAZ)
38. University Presbyterian Church
39. Vote Solar
40. Western Watersheds Project
41. Westwood High School Environmental Club
42. Yuma Audubon Society