



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Sierra Club Releases 2022 Environmental Report Card for AZ Legislature *A Long Unproductive Session for Environmental Issues facing Arizona***

Phoenix, AZ – Today, Sierra Club released [its 2022 Environmental Report Card for the Arizona Legislature and Governor](#). The 2022 Legislative Session was again long and unproductive regarding the major environmental issues facing our state – limited action on climate, no action on environmental justice, and another step backward on water, or at least one that continues business as usual. The attacks on democracy accelerated and several bills made it to the governor’s desk and were signed and some made it to the ballot. Importantly, however, a slew of bills to hinder voting and voter registration were held back by a sustained effort from voting rights advocates.

Bills to address climate resiliency, limit groundwater exploitation or even meter it or sustain flowing rivers were again stopped, most without a hearing, while bills to weaken groundwater protections advanced through the House of Representatives but were stopped due to a lack of votes in the Senate. Even the modest bill, to establish Rural Management Areas for groundwater, could not make it out of the House. While the Sierra Club thought [HB2661](#) needed to be much stronger, it is telling that not even this voluntary measure could advance.

“Despite the fact that Arizona is experiencing significant negative impacts from climate change with the increasing aridity of our state, larger and more intense wildfires, more extreme heat and the increase in heat related deaths, as well as increased utility bills, and all of the stresses these are putting on Arizonans, the Arizona Legislature elected to do almost nothing to address climate change, neglecting to even hear bills to provide for climate resiliency planning,” said **Sandy Bahr, chapter director for Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon Chapter**. “The actions as well as inaction on water was equally irresponsible. The session’s major water legislation, [SB1740](#), continues water business as usual in Arizona, heavily investing in water augmentation that can include desalination and other infrastructure that is harmful to the environment, expensive, and energy intensive. There was no regulatory element to this bill and no other bills to regulate and protect ground and surface water advanced.”

The budget included numerous harmful proposals, including funding for border infrastructure, big water augmentation projects such as desalination, and funding to continue with studies on the harmful I-11 freeway. There was a small amount – \$2.5 million – appropriated for the State Parks Heritage Fund. This was far below the \$10 million annually the voters had approved for it. There was also funding for the Arizona Trail and some needed dollars for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to address the backlog of water quality issues identified in its [2021 performance audit](#).

There were fewer legislators who received an “F” on the Environmental Report Card in the 2022 Legislative Session, but still far too many – 33 – and it was another session of missed opportunities to act on climate, better protect our waters, improve our air quality, and put our state on track to being more sustainable. There were no “A+” grades, but there were 18 senators and representatives who earned an “A.” House members were graded on 12 bills, one referendum, and two resolutions. Senators were graded on 16 bills, one referendum, and two resolutions. **Governor Doug Ducey** was graded on 10 bills and again earned an “F” on the report card. His legacy on environmental issues is dismal.

*The Sierra Club is one of the largest and most influential grassroots environmental organizations in the U.S., with more than 3.5 million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person’s right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. The Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club, representing 16,000 members, has a long history of advocacy at the Arizona Legislature and at the end of each legislative session, the Grand Canyon Chapter develops its report card in order to inform Arizonans about their legislators’ voting records on key environmental, democracy, and justice issues.*

*The Sierra Club report card is available on the website in English [here](#) and Spanish [here](#).*

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