

## News Release

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### **Groups Release Environmental Priorities for Arizona Legislature and Governor Endorsed by 31 Organizations and 13 Elected Officials**

(Phoenix, AZ) - Today, **Rep. Andrés Cano**, ranking member of the House Natural Resources, Energy, and Water Committee, joined 31 groups and 12 other elected officials (see full list below) in releasing the [2022 Environmental Priorities for the Arizona Legislature and Governor](#). The priorities focus on needed actions on climate change, water, democracy, environmental justice, and land protection and restoration, among other issues.

“These issues may not be on the agenda for the majority at the legislature or the governor right now, but they should be and we are committed to making sure climate, environmental justice, sustainable water policies, land protections, and strengthening our democracy are not ignored,” said Sandy Bahr, chapter director for Sierra Club’s Grand Canyon Chapter.

The groups ask the Arizona Legislature pass and Governor Ducey sign bills that measure and limit groundwater pumping throughout Arizona, especially outside active management areas and in areas where it is affecting the flows in our rivers. Rather than merely pursuing importing water from outside Arizona, we ask that our leaders examine the sustainability of the current growth and development patterns, the current agricultural practices, and the opportunities for deeper conservation such as reclamation and treatment of wastewater flows.

“We have an urgent and historic opportunity right in front of us,” said Representative Andrés Cano. “Mitigating the drought we are in and creating a smarter, more sustainable economy will not only save our state in the long run, but it will also spur innovation and strengthen our economy. Unsustainable groundwater pumping in our state means that wells will go dry and aquifers will collapse—it’s why the Colorado River is in a shortage. It doesn’t have to be this way. We have options—let’s use them.”

“Science tells us we are in a climate crisis that affects every sector of our economy and every aspect of our lives,” said Hazel Chandler, Coordinator with Elders Climate Action and Union of Concerned Scientists. “We ask the Arizona Legislature and Governor Ducey to pass legislation to develop a climate resiliency plan so Arizona is better

prepared for the worsening impacts of climate change, promote bills to accelerate investments in clean energy and that do not hinder actions at the Arizona Corporation Commission or at any local level, invest in transportation electrification, including electric school and transit buses along with a more robust electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and help to promote greater energy efficiency.”

Ulisses Correa, Environmental Justice Organizer with Mi Familia Vota called on the legislature and governor to take action in support of environmental justice and consider the disproportionate impacts of pollution on people of color. He was joined by Doug Bland with Arizona Interfaith Power and Light in calling on the legislature for action.

“Here in Arizona, those who contribute least to the destruction of our precious planet home, suffer first and suffer the most,” said Doug Bland, executive director with Arizona Interfaith Power and Light. “Breathable air and drinkable water should be a basic human right, but it’s not so in Arizona. If you live in South Phoenix and Maryvale, the incidence of asthma is three times higher than it is in Scottsdale. If you live on the Navajo Nation, not only is potable water often not available but when it is available it’s more likely to be contaminated by arsenic and uranium from the 500 abandoned mines we’ve left there. This is no way to love our neighbors. Clean air and water shouldn’t be determined by your zip code. We call it what it is: environmental racism. The ultimate pollutant is our greed and selfishness.”

"The Arizona State Legislature has an opportunity to pass laws that will protect wildlife, native plants, and the wild places that provide opportunities for recreation in Arizona this coming session," said Cyndi Tuell, Arizona and New Mexico Director, Western Watersheds Project. "These laws could support federal land managers in doing the same. We start 2022 with the hope that our elected officials will do just that, and that they will fully embrace the Biden administration's 30 by 30 America the Beautiful proposal, that they will work with Tribal nations to ensure that lands are returned to them and establish co-management of lands where possible."

Sarah King with the Arizona Faith Network called on the legislature to remove barriers to voting and pass measures to ensure a healthy democracy.

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

**<https://www.facebook.com/sierraclubaz/videos/458943519027605>**

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

**Supporters of the 2022 Environmental Priorities include the following groups:**

- **African American Christian Clergy Coalition**
- **Arizona Climate Action Coalition**
- **Arizona Faith Network**

- Arizona Interfaith Power & Light
- Black Mesa Trust
- Cherishing Creation Collaborative
- Chispa Arizona
- Christian Church in Arizona
- Coalition for Sonoran Desert Protection
- Defend Our Future
- Desert Southwest Conference United Methodist Women
- Elders Action Network - Southern Arizona Chapter (EAN SoAZ)
- Elders Climate Action
- Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Middle Gila Broadband
- Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Sonoran Broadband
- Great old Broads for Wilderness, Tucson Region
- Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Yavapai-Prescott Broadband
- Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Phoenix
- Kids Climate Action Network
- Mi Familia Vota
- Sema Foundation
- Sierra Club - Grand Canyon Chapter
- Southwest Conference United Church of Christ
- St. Teresa of Ávila Catholic Community
- The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona
- Union of Concerned Scientists
- United Methodist Women of the Desert Southwest Conference
- Vote Solar
- Western Watersheds Project
- WildEarth Guardians
- Yuma Audubon Society

**Supporters of the 2022 Environmental Priorities include the following elected officials:**

- Becky Daggett, Vice-Mayor of Flagstaff
- Adam Shimoni, Flagstaff City Councilmember
- Corey Woods, Mayor of Tempe
- Lauren Kuby, Tempe City Councilmember
- Regina Romero, Mayor of Tucson
- Arizona Representative Richard Andrade
- Arizona Representative Andrés Cano
- Arizona Representative Mitzi Epstein
- Arizona Representative Judy Schwiebert
- Arizona Senator Juan Jose Mendez
- Arizona Senator Martín Quezada
- Arizona Senator Stephanie Stahl-Hamilton
- Arizona Senator Victoria Steele

