



## The AZ Legislature -- a whirlwind of bad public policy



The Floor of the Arizona House of Representatives

February 28, 2020

Hi everyone!

This week there was a whirlwind of bad public policy advancing in the Legislature, mostly from the House, but the Senate had its share too. The good news is a couple of bad bills did not move forward, including a strike-everything amendment on SCR1010 that would have undermined clean energy. Still in play, although with growing opposition, is a measure to shift our system of electing Arizona Corporation Commissioners to having them appointed by the Governor, as well as a measure to impede the promotion of electric vehicles. Several measures passed out of the House to weaken water laws and facilitate additional groundwater pumping and no bills advanced to help address this growing concern in rural areas. Helping rivers is also pretty much off the table.

The endangered species secrecy measure passed out of the House along party lines 31-29 and will likely be voted on in the Senate early next week. See below for more on that. The Arizona House also advanced a bill to make it more difficult to do citizen initiatives and give the Arizona Chamber of Commerce yet one more angle for suing to kick a measure off the ballot -- this is HCR2032. They will be considering another anti-initiative measure on Monday. Watch for a special alert on that.

On a positive note, the bills to fund the Heritage Fund and the Save the Dells effort advanced. The

Heritage Fund appropriation in the Senate was cut from \$10 million to \$1 million, however.

As you may have seen, Governor Ducey signed HB2686, the bill that will keep local government from doing more to limit greenhouse gas emissions. This is disappointing, but not surprising, and absolutely a backward step for Arizona

**If you are signed up for the [Request to Speak](#) system, please sign in to oppose HB2054, HB2084, HCM2004, and SB1434.**

**Please sign in to support HB2217, HB2593, and HB2618.**

Legislators are again making what has become an annual attack on direct democracy, seeking to weaken the voter protection act provisions in the Arizona Constitution. **Please use the button below to send a message to your senator. Ask them to vote NO on SCR1020.**

---

---

Take Action!

---

### Stop Science Secrecy Bills -- Protect Endangered Species

The Arizona Legislature is proposing a pair of bills, modeled after Texas laws that allow information about threatened and endangered species to be kept from the public and from other state and federal agencies. We cannot fulfill our watchdog role relative to state agencies and actions that are supposed to contribute to the recovery of imperiled plants and animals without having adequate information.

**If you have already taken action on these bills, thank you. If you have not, please use the button below to ask your senator to oppose both HB2749 and SB1666. This bill will likely go to the Senate floor early next week, so please act now!**

---

Take Action!

---

### Our voices, Our vote -- for the Arizona Corporation Commission!

While some Arizona Legislators think that the people of Arizona should no longer be able to elect candidates to the Arizona Corporation Commission, the entity that regulates monopoly utilities, it appears that it may not be a majority. HCR2041, the bill that would ask voters to approve having the Governor appoint commissioners is having some trouble in the House and a similar bill was already killed in the Senate. Let's keep up the pressure.

**If you have not done so already, please contact your House members today and [ask them to vote NO on HCR2041](#). Use the take action button below.**

---

Take Action!

---

To see the other bills we are tracking, use [this link for our Legislative Tracker](#), which you can also find on our website.

If you are not sure who your legislators are, just use this [Find My Legislator link](#) and enter your address. To contact legislators, go to [Members](#). You will find their phone numbers and email addresses.

If you are not signed up for the Request to Speak and would like to be, here is how you get started. Go to [Request to Speak](#) to set up an account, just select "Create An Account" and fill out the information. You will need to go to the Capitol or to the Tucson legislative offices to activate it or you can contact me and I will help you activate it.

Thank you for taking action!



Sandy Bahr  
Chapter Director  
Sierra Club - Grand Canyon Chapter



## Coming up this week at the Legislature

---

### Monday, March 2nd

#### Senate Committee on Government at 2:00 P.M. in SHR3

- [HB2054 GRRC; petition to request review](#) (Biasiucci: Bolick) allows a person to petition the Governor's Regulatory Review Council (GRRC) to review Citizens Clean Elections Commission's (CCEC) existing practices, policies, and rules, if they think it doesn't meet certain requirements. This is an effort to rein in the CCEC from doing its job. **OPPOSE.**
- [HB2084 international boundary wall; building permits](#) (Petersen: Barto, Biasiucci, et al.) prohibits a city, town, or county from requiring that a nonprofit corporation or property owner obtain a building or any kind of construction permit prior to constructing an international boundary wall, and further establishes a presumption that the state will grant permission for construction of an international boundary wall on state land. This latter provision may be unconstitutional, but the bill is just more xenophobia from the Arizona Legislature. **OPPOSE .**
- [HB2713 agency actions; procedures; fee awards](#) (Grantham: Pierce) increases the maximum allowable amount of court fees that may be awarded to the prevailing party in certain cases against the state, cities, towns, and counties. It also makes some other modifications regarding licensing. This is a measure being supported by the Goldwater Institute, so needs to be watched. **MONITOR.**

### Tuesday, March 3rd

#### Senate Committee on Appropriations at 2:00 P.M. in SHR109

- [HB2101 appropriation; Arizona water protection fund](#) (Griffin: Nutt) appropriates \$1 million to the Arizona Water Protection Fund, which once was focused on riparian restoration, but less so today since Rep. Griffin has shifted the focus more to agriculture. **MONITOR.**
- [HB2243 Now: appropriation; Gila River bridge](#) (Shope: Allen J) appropriates \$28 million for a new bridge over the Gila River on I-10. **MONITOR.**
- [HB2416 environmental special plate; conservation districts](#) (Dunn) says the land department will distribute \$10 thousand annually to each natural resource conservation district with an education center. There are 25 in the state. This is more subsidies for agricultural interests. **MONITOR.**

#### House Committee on Elections at 2:00 P.M. in HHR4

- Presentation on Elections Cybersecurity by the Arizona Department of Administration, the Arizona Secretary of State, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- [SB1434 recall petitions and elections; revisions](#) (Gowan) makes it more difficult to recall elected officials. **OPPOSE.**

### Wednesday, March 4th

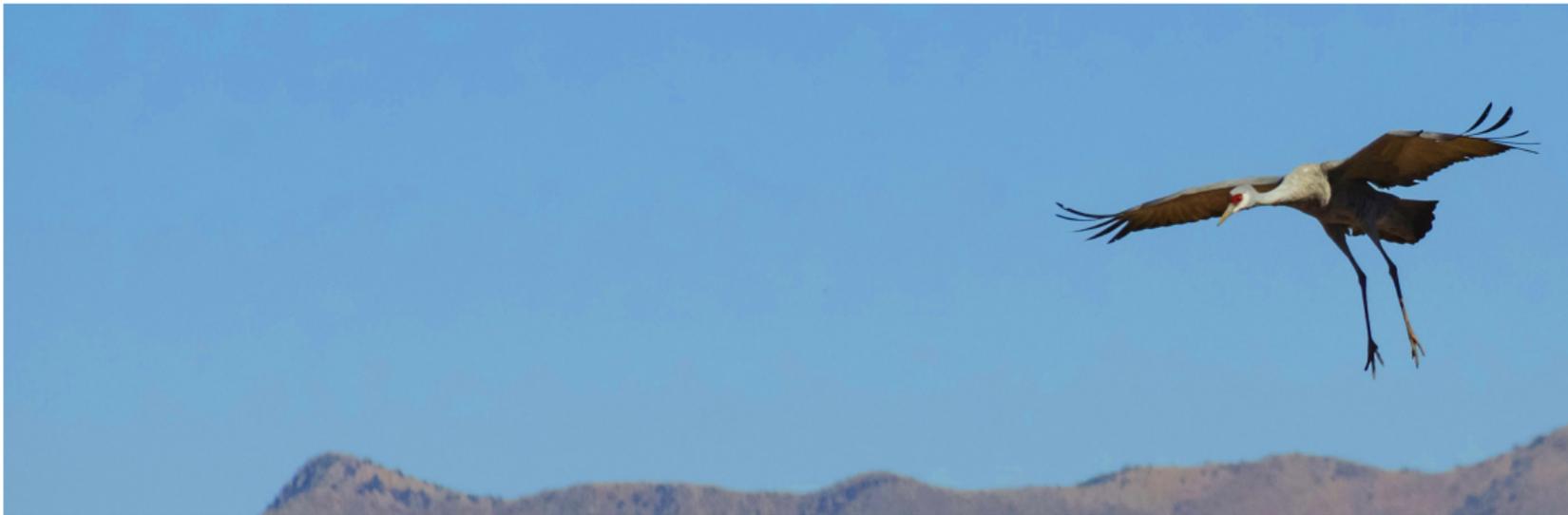
#### Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy at 2:00 P.M. in SHR109

- [HB2217 outdoor recreation coordinating commission; continuation](#) (Griffin) continues this commission until 2023. **SUPPORT.**
- [HB2218 state mine inspector; qualifications](#) (Griffin) requires the state mine inspector to have some qualifications relative to mines, including knowledge of state and federal mine safety and health regulations. This seems like a good thing as right now the position is just a cheerleader for the mining industry. **MONITOR.**
- [HB2219 G&F; private lands; trespassing](#) (Griffin) clarifies that wildlife cannot be taken from property that is posted for no trespassing. This seems fine. **MONITOR.**
- [HB2365 conservation districts; invasive vegetation; research](#) (Dunn) allows natural resource conservation districts to conduct research on eradicating invasive vegetation. These entities are not accountable to the public, but are being given a lot more authority and a lot more money by the legislature. **MONITOR.**
- [HB2616 noxious weeds; government projects](#) (Griffin) says the state and political subdivisions can remove noxious weeds and that they cannot plant them for landscaping. I think this is already the case, so I am not sure what the need is. It specifically calls out salt cedar and Russian olive trees. **MONITOR.**
- [HB2593 mining advisory council; repeal](#) (Griffin) repeals this council that does little, if anything. **SUPPORT.**

### Thursday, March 5th

#### Senate Committee on Water and Agriculture at 10:00 A.M. in SHR3

- [HB2309 groundwater; waterlogged area exemption; date](#) (Dunn) extends exemptions from water duties and other requirements for the Buckeye waterlogged area. **MONITOR.**
  - [HB2417 conservation districts; water conservation; awareness](#) (Dunn) allows these entities to conduct water conservation awareness. Considering their agricultural focus, are they the best entities to do this? **MONITOR.**
  - [HB2618 department of water resources; continuation](#) (Griffin) continues the Arizona Department of Water Resources to 2028. We support keeping the agency, but would like to see it do more to protect our water resources. **SUPPORT.**
  - [HB2621 tax credit; water conservation system](#) (Dunn) requires a taxpayer to file a conservation plan with a natural resource conservation district, instead of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, in order to qualify for an agricultural water conservation system tax credit. This is more self-oversight and again shifting more authority to entities that are not accountable to the larger public. **MONITOR.**
  - [HB2675 water conservation notice; no abandonment](#) (Griffin: Bowers, Dunn, et al.) allows those who are entitled to use surface water to file a conservation plan notice and to refile the notice for up to 10 years enabling them to hold on to their water rights, even if they are not putting them to beneficial use, thus avoiding forfeiture or abandonment of the rights. This has potential to conserve some water within certain watersheds, but it is unclear what it will do in others. We initially opposed the bill, but currently are monitoring it. **MONITOR.**
  - [HB2677 groundwater replenishment reserves](#) (Griffin) changes the formula the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGRDR) uses to calculate the required replenishment reserve. This change means there is less water included in the reserve. Apparently, the bill codifies what the CAGRDR is doing currently. **MONITOR.**
  - [HCM2004 Yuma desalting plant; continued operation](#) (Griffin) asks the federal government to operate the Yuma Desalting Plant, an expensive, inefficient, and environmentally harmful endeavor. **OPPOSE.**
-



Sandhill Crane, photo by Ricardo Small

---



---

Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter