

FACTSHEET

SB 1306 (local groundwater stewardship areas)



January 31, 2023

The Water for Arizona Coalition (WAC) supports SB 1306 because it provides new funding and an opt-in, locally-adaptable option for groundwater protection for rural Arizona.

Stewardship Areas put local communities in the driver's seat while the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) provides support. **Groundwater is essential.** It is a primary water supply for homes, industry, and agriculture. Yet rural groundwater supplies are unprotected, and in many areas those supplies are dwindling, jeopardizing the future of those regions.

Stewardship areas empower rural communities with choices and options to create locally tailored solutions to meet local needs, providing an alternative to the more rigid option of new Active Management Areas (AMAs) or the status quo of unlimited pumping of finite groundwater.

No new taxes or fees are necessary. Instead, \$50 million/ year is dedicated from state lottery funds for administration, technical support, and implementation including supporting water users in efforts to conserve and augment groundwater supplies.

Numerous types of voluntary conservation programs and incentives could be customized and funded for agricultural, industrial, and municipal users to help meet Stewardship Area goals.

Under SB 1306 a Stewardship Area:

- Can be established in a groundwater basin, subbasin, or portion of a basin in multiple ways, but in each case **the establishment process must be open and transparent to the public.**
- Can only be created if certain conditions are present, such as, if rates of groundwater use exceed the recharge rate or there are physical indications of over pumping.
- **Is led by a locally representative council** nominated by the Board of Supervisors and appointed by the Governor. A council must form an advisory technical committee that includes a seat for ADWR.
- Once created, is authorized to establish local goals and a management plan.
- **May mix and match from a variety of tools** to include in a management plan to meet locally-determined goals. Proposed actions in the management plan must be authorized and carried out by relevant local government entities, local water utilities, or by ADWR.
- **Provides value for water users and rural economic sectors by promoting stability** of shared groundwater supplies and including flexibilities and new funding options to support landowners, industry, agriculture, towns, and residents.

waterforarizona.com

The **Water for Arizona Coalition** is comprised of Arizonans who support policies and innovative practices to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state's needs. Collectively, we have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunter, angler, business, and outdoor recreation partners around the state.

Member organizations: American Rivers • Business for Water Stewardship • Environmental Defense Fund
National Audubon Society • Western Resource Advocates