

SENATOR SINE KERR

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**MAJORITY WHIP****COMMITTEES:**

Natural Resources, Energy and Water
Appropriations
Education
Rules

February 12, 2024

Director Buschatzke,

As a state Senator who represents rural Arizona farmers, ranchers, landowners, and portions of the Gila Bend Groundwater Basin, as well as someone whose family's livelihood for generations has relied upon the preservation of our precious natural resources, I'm writing to you to voice my strong opposition to the Active Management Area (AMA) designation proposal for the Gila Bend Groundwater Basin.

In her 2024 State of the State Address, Governor Hobbs made it clear she would work with the Legislature to enact groundwater policy. She also threatened that if the Legislature did not act, she would.

Over the past several months, I've committed my time serving at the Legislature to researching and developing a tool that empowers rural Arizonans to manage, measure, conserve, and protect the groundwater within their communities for the benefit of their citizens and their local economies for decades to come. Although still a work in progress, SB 1221 reflects the input of the actual water users whose voices were diminished within the Governor's Water Policy Council. This proposal has been vetted and developed in collaboration with some of the greatest stewards of our natural resources to meet their unique needs while safeguarding their futures. We should be using their wisdom to establish sound groundwater management policy, not overriding it through executive action that promises to have detrimental impacts to the very people who are tasked with growing the food and fiber you and the rest of our Arizona citizens rely on.

The announcement of an "informal" public meeting to evaluate the initiation of an AMA for the Gila Bend Basin, without notice to the Town of Gila Bend, and on the same day moments before I filed proposed legislation developed by rural Arizonans, runs counter to finding an agreement on legislation.

This is not how government, or its agencies, should operate within the United States of America. The very foundation of our republic was created under the idea that a government's righteousness to use state power is only justified and lawful when agreed to by the people that this political power is used over. I'm urging both you and the Governor to not circumvent the legislative process, as this sets a dangerous and undemocratic precedent in which our citizens did not approve of.

I respectfully request the Arizona Department of Water Resources withdraw this AMA proposal immediately. Additionally, I encourage both you and the Governor to work with the Legislature to devise a commonsense solution rural Arizonans will consent to that will protect both groundwater resources and local economies.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sine Kerr".

Senate Majority Whip Sine Kerr (R-25)
Chairwoman, Natural Resources, Energy and Water Committee