

REFERENCE TITLE: appropriation; department of water resources

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-seventh Legislature
First Regular Session
2025

HB 2692

Introduced by
Representative Diaz

AN ACT

APPROPRIATING MONIES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Appropriation; department of water resources;
3 maintenance and operation

4 The sum of \$13,318,250 is appropriated from the state general fund
5 in fiscal year 2025-2026 to the department of water resources for the
6 maintenance and operation of the department.

7 Sec. 2. Findings and intent

8 A. The legislature finds that:

9 1. Since June 1, 2023, the department of water resources has not
10 processed a single application for a certificate of assured water supply,
11 despite numerous applications currently pending in the queue, leaving an
12 entire division of the department sitting idle, collecting paychecks and
13 not fulfilling the basic duties of the department.

14 2. While an entire division of the department sits idle, housing
15 scarcity and prices continue to rise in the Phoenix and Pinal active
16 management areas, as for-sale residential housing developments, which
17 replenish one hundred percent of their respective groundwater use, are
18 demonized while commercial and industrial water users outside of
19 designated providers are encouraged to continue relocating to this state,
20 growing, and pumping groundwater without replenishing the aquifer.

21 3. Since June 1, 2023, the director of the department of water
22 resources, at the direction of the governor, has diverted considerable
23 time, full-time equivalent positions and resources to overt political
24 activities, such as:

25 (a) The establishment and administration of frivolous policymaking
26 councils, focus groups and brainstorming sessions.

27 (b) Threatening the establishment of active management areas in
28 rural groundwater basins where the establishment of such areas is not
29 supported by local hydrology.

30 (c) The development and adoption of rules that are blatantly
31 illegal, inconsistent with legislative intent and beyond the department's
32 statutory authority to adopt.

33 (d) The administration of the "Governor's Water Policy Council" and
34 related sub-committees and working groups.

35 (e) The threatened establishment of an active management area in
36 the Gila Bend groundwater basin.

37 (f) The establishment of an active management area in the Willcox
38 groundwater basin against the will of the people.

39 (g) The development and adoption of "Alternative Path to
40 Designation of Assured Water Supply" rules, which the department has no
41 authority to adopt.

42 (h) The proposed development of "Ag-to-Urban" rules, which would
43 require specific enabling legislation.

44 4. The department's participation in these extra-statutory and
45 extracurricular political activities and pet projects has diverted

1 hundreds of hours away from completing the department's core functions,
2 rendering the department lacking in key areas such as:

3 (a) Adequately and timely processing of applications related to
4 ongoing general stream adjudications.

5 (b) Gathering and including all relevant information in the
6 department's five-year supply and demand assessments for rural groundwater
7 basins.

8 (c) Updating the department's comprehensive groundwater flow models
9 with the latest information in the Phoenix and Pinal active management
10 areas.

11 (d) Defending this state's interests on the Colorado River.

12 5. The department's continued participation in these
13 extra-statutory activities has not only undermined the integrity and
14 credibility of the department as the state's primary authority on matters
15 pertaining to rural and urban surface water and groundwater, but has also
16 cost this state's taxpayers substantial sums in the form of government
17 deadweight that has been commandeered for the purpose of satisfying the
18 governor's political ends rather than faithfully executing the law as
19 written.

20 B. It is the intent of the legislature to ensure that the reduction
21 of the department's fiscal year 2025-2026 state general fund appropriation
22 be allocated to the reduction of non-essential sections, programs and
23 divisions, thereby compelling the department to refocus its internal time
24 and resources on only those functions and duties that fall clearly within
25 the department's statutorily defined responsibilities.