



REGULATORY ROUND-UP

Issue 4 – February 28, 2022

Steps to Climate Change Policy Responses

Working together to develop cogent policies to address climate change mitigation is critical, we should not get distracted away from this issue. Natural resource use and regulation are at the center of many of the policy debates. We are reaching a time where our hesitation and political posturing barriers to making the necessary policy changes on how we use fossil fuels and manage impacts will be more and more costly on many levels for each passing year of inaction. Below are some steps currently being taken by federal and state legislative as well as agency policy makers and the latest round of scientific information available.

Agency Policy Approach

[USDA Creates Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities](#). According to the announcement: “USDA is committed to supporting a diverse set of farmers, ranchers and forest owners through climate solutions that increase resilience, expand market opportunities and strengthen rural America. The new Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities opportunity provides up to \$1 billion for pilot projects that create market opportunities for commodities produced using climate-smart practices. USDA is now accepting project applications for fiscal year 2022.” Funding pool applications: Round 1 - \$5,000,000 to \$100,000,000 due April 8, 2022; Round 2- \$250,000 to \$4,999,999 until May 27, 2022. There is a scheduled **webinar on March 3 at 3 pm ET, [registration](#) is required.**

Legislative Policy Approaches

Arizona Legislature: At the introduction stage: [SCR 1045](#) Supporting Governmental Actions to End Global Warming; [SB1434](#) Establishing an Arizona Climate Resiliency Planning Group; [HCR2034](#) Supporting Climate Change Mitigation Efforts in Arizona.

U.S. Congress: Many bills and resolutions were introduced in 2021, none have been voted on with the exception of Growing Climate Solutions Act ([S.1251](#)) that passed the Senate. The recently introduced National Climate Adaptation and Resilience Strategy Act ([H.R.6461](#)/[S.3531](#)) is a first approach at developing a National Strategy to address climate change from a resilience and adaptation standpoint.

Scientific Information for Decision Makers

United States: NOAA released the latest iteration of the [State Climate Summaries](#) that incorporate historical climate data up to 2020. According to the summary for Arizona, “temperatures have risen by 2.5° F” and the upward trends are continuing on temperature and drought, decreasing and greater variability in precipitation, and the continued downward trend on number of very cold nights. The majority of the models show Southeastern Arizona will experience a greater than 20% decrease in spring precipitation. The [Fifth National Assessment on Climate change](#) is currently in development and scheduled to be published by 2023. Although Arizona is land locked, this recent report from [NOAA on sea level rise](#) is a good indicator on the costliness and progression of climate change impacts.

International: The IPCC released February 28, 2022, the [Working Group II, Sixth Assessment report \(AR6\) on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability Report](#). This report assesses global and regional climate change impacts, vulnerabilities and capabilities of adaptation for ecosystems, biodiversity, and human communities. The (AR) 6 *Climate Change Physical Science Basis* came out last August. This report revealed the current state of our knowledge on the projected impacts and changes in temperature and precipitation. Please take a look at the [Summary for Policymakers](#) and [a new atlas tool](#) helps viewers visualize the projections and understand the physical science basis behind them. The Working Group III report on *Mitigation* will be released by April 2022.

NEPA

[Compliance Matters: NEPA and "Environmental Evaluation" at NRCS webinar recording link](#). This webinar goes over the basics of NEPA and how USDA NRCS manages the NEPA process programmatically for conservation planning projects as well as categorical exclusions. The link does require input of personal information and demographics survey for statistical purposes for NRCS programs tracking.

Water

WOTUS and Regional Roundtables Announced: On February 24, 2022, the Army Corps of Engineers and EPA selected [ten regional roundtables](#) “that highlight geographic differences and a range of perspectives—including agriculture, conservation groups, developers, drinking water and wastewater managers, environmental organizations, communities with environmental justice concerns, industry, Tribal nations, and state and local governments.” The two roundtables selected for the Southwest region are Amigos Bravos and the Arizona Farm Bureau. They anticipate these roundtables to occur virtually this spring and summer. A [Tribal Roundtable](#) (video recording link) was hosted by the agencies on January 22, 2022.

Mining

The 9th Circuit decision in the [GRAND CANYON TRUST V. PROVENCIO](#) case allows the Canyon Mine on the Kaibab National Forest in Arizona to move forward.