



H.R. 1503 - Avra/Black Wash Reclamation and Riparian Restoration Project

Floor Situation

H.R. 1503 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) on March 13, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported from the Committee on Natural Resources by unanimous consent.

H.R.1503 is expected to be considered on the floor on July 23, 2007.

Summary

This legislation authorizes the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with Pima County, Arizona, to participate in the planning, design, and construction of water recycling facilities in the Avra Valley, and to enhance and restore riparian habitat in the Black Wash Sonoran Desert ecosystem which lies west of the metropolitan Pima County area.

The legislation authorizes \$14,000,000 to be used in the construction and planning of the recycling project in the Avra Valley/Black Wash.

Background

This project is designed to recycle and conserve water in the Avra Valley region. The Black Wash Sonoran Desert is a desert located in the Southern region of Arizona and has the most diverse vegetation growth of any desert in the world.

The majority of priority vulnerable species identified in Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan utilize or require riparian habitat. Riparian is defined as pertaining to the banks of a river or stream. Riparian areas benefit a region by providing recreation opportunities, flood control, fish and wildlife habitat, and flood plain irrigation water. While riparian areas are rare, they have been used for different reasons, at one time for agriculture, and more recently for recreation and urban water needs.

In Pima County, the conditions of riparian areas generally fall into the following categories:

- Flood control features with very little vegetation;

- Dual purpose washes that convey storm water but also contain some natural elements;
- Effluent-based systems, such as those downstream from the wastewater outfalls;
- Outlying rural washes, with little direct impact from urbanization, but that still receive indirect impacts; and
- A few unique waters that include a lot of critical elements such as perennial groundwater, shallow groundwater, and unique vegetation communities. The San Pedro River, Honey Bee Canyon, Cienega Creek, and the west branch of the Santa Cruz are examples of these somewhat pristine watercourses.

Cost

At the time of publication the Congressional Budget Office had not yet scored this legislation.

Staff Contact

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