

## ***Arizona Thrives Charts the Path to Build Vibrant Communities with Clean Air, Clean Energy***

### ***The Nature Conservancy Releases Report with Recommendations to Improve Quality of Life, Boost Economy***

**[PHOENIX]** Arizona continues to be one of the fastest growing states and is developing an increasingly diverse and dynamic economy. To attract new business and maintain competitiveness nationally and internationally, it needs to continue to embrace emerging technologies and support a healthy environment. Today, The Nature Conservancy released **Arizona Thrives**. This report and framework is the product of a diverse group of leaders working together to improve our air quality, ensure vibrant communities and bolster the economy by accelerating the transition to lower cost and reliable clean energy.

Phoenix's average temperatures are the hottest in the nation and are projected to become much hotter. Several Arizona counties rank among the lowest in the U.S. for air quality – posing both serious health issues and the loss of billions of economic development opportunities. The forests that sustain our largest renewable water supply are at risk of catastrophic fire. Twenty-year droughts may become the new normal if proactive measures are not taken.

“Cleaner air and the health of the economy affect everyone living in Arizona. For the past year we have been fortunate to bring together leaders to change the conversation around clean air, clean energy and creating jobs in the new economy,” said Patrick Graham, state director of The Nature Conservancy in Arizona. “We have an opportunity to move past polarization and chart a path that works for Arizona. Now is the time to move forward.”

The Nature Conservancy convened a task force to urge action across all sectors of the economy and substantially accelerate our ability to meet Federal Air Quality Standards for ozone emissions by 2024 and net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The resulting Arizona Thrives framework identifies eight major levers that affect clean air and energy. They represent cooperation among both industry and individuals, such as: reduction of barriers to increasing the number of electric vehicles, incentives for fuel-efficient cars, creation of cool islands and corridors in urban areas by planting of the right kind of trees, employers encouraging telecommute days to reduce miles driven and congestion and improved forest management to reduce large scale fires. These changes must be made economy-wide, with cooperation across sectors.

It is the foundation for the next phase of Arizona Thrives – convening a state- and economy-wide coalition to create a path forward. Leaders agree there is both a need and opportunity for an economy-wide approach for Arizona, and a plan that works for Arizonans. A plan that is affordable, reliable and competitive.

Many organizations are already working to mitigate the risks for Arizonans. However, no single entity can achieve alone what this coalition can do together.

Building on the momentum created in developing the report, the task force will focus on addressing clean air and energy goals in how we power the economy, how we move and where we live and work.

An expanded group of leaders from four economic segments – electric energy generation, local transportation, residential and community development, and industry as well as both urban and rural interests, and different levels of government – will meet over the next 5-6 months to continue the collaborative work and identify an ongoing structure. Strategy groups will identify opportunities, model outcomes and present possible strategies along with interim goals to reduce emissions.

This affects everyone living in Arizona. The coalition will assess where Arizona is today in terms of emissions of ozone and carbon. Ozone has harmful effects on people's lungs, creating inflammation and reduced lung capacity. It is particularly harmful to the young and old. Carbon can trap heat and increase temperatures, increasing the risk of drought, fires, severe storms and depletion of water supplies.

A convergence of interests makes now the right time to move ahead in coordinated way: broad public support, demands by businesses, lower-cost clean energy and a need to meet clean air standards. There is an opportunity to shape Arizona's continuing growth so it is more sustainable, diverse and supports healthy, livable communities.

Leadership from diverse segments of our economy are engaged in *Arizona Thrives*.

**Diane Brown, Executive Director, Arizona PIRG Education Fund:** "The strength of Arizona Thrives is the strength of Arizona: collaboration between state and local government, business and non-profit leaders; incorporation of unique expertise and experiences, including from urban and rural perspectives; and building upon successes while addressing challenges. Arizona Thrives is #TheArizonaWay. The Arizona PIRG Education Fund looks forward to continued involvement with The Nature Conservancy and others to develop and deliver on a visionary, data-driven and integrated approach to improve air quality, public health and consumer pocketbooks through increased transportation options, energy efficiency and cleaner energy resources."

**Gary Dirks, Senior Director, Global Futures Lab, and Director, LightWorks®, Arizona State University:** "With major shifts underway in the energy system as a result of new technologies, new business entrants and new business models there is an opportunity for business, government, civil society and the academy to work together on a comprehensive framework for a thriving Arizona. A framework that anticipates challenges and identifies opportunities for Arizona to prosper in a healthy, clean environment."

**Mayor Kate Gallego, City of Phoenix:** "As the fifth-biggest and fastest-growing city in the nation and a recently named C40 member, Phoenix is ready to help build this statewide climate effort to prove that the challenges we face are opportunities for innovation. With the intertwined goals of pursuing clean air and energy, while promoting an equitable and opportunity-rich economy, this coalition is charting a path toward a more prosperous future for our great state."

**Jeff Guldner, CEO Pinnacle West:** "Collaboration is a key ingredient to managing affordability and reliability as we all make progress in clean energy in Arizona, and we are excited to work with The Nature Conservancy as they move forward with this important initiative."

**Glenn Hamer, President and Chief Executive Officer, Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** "The Arizona Thrives report lays out a path with key levers to clean air and clean energy that further our state's economic growth and position Arizona for success. There is growing momentum to work

collaboratively across sectors to fuel a thriving economy while creating a cleaner environment and diversifying energy sources. Now is the right time.”

**Mike Hummel, General Manager and CEO, Salt River Project:** “SRP commends The Nature Conservancy for bringing together leaders and stakeholders from across the state to map out a path for a bright and healthy future for Arizona. At SRP, we are proud to be a part of this collaboration as it aligns well with SRP’s sustainability goals to reduce carbon emissions, protect our forests and watersheds; enable electric vehicles and conserve our precious water resources.”

**David G. Hutchens, CEO, Tucson Electric Power and UniSource Energy Services:** “This report represents an important step toward a collaborative response to our state’s most critical environmental challenges. The only way to address these challenges effectively is by working together.”

**Drena Kusari, Regional Director, Lyft:** "At Lyft, our mission is to improve people's lives with the world's best transportation. Our vision is to build cities around people, not cars and have a strong responsibility for the profound impact that Lyft will have on our planet. We are therefore thrilled to be involved in the Arizona Thrives task force, collaborating with local businesses and communities to find solutions for a sustainable future."

**Cheryl Lombard, President and CEO, Valley Partnership:** “A clean energy economy is important for the future of Arizona and how it addresses impacts from climate such as heat and water security. Nature-based solutions have multiple benefits to our environment and the livability to communities and our cities. As a voice for responsible real estate development across the Valley, Valley Partnership members know they are part of the long-term solution of this economy – from focusing on development near transit that does not require as much parking, incentivizing electric vehicles in our developments, and ensuring all development landscaping plans help alleviate heat and improve walkability.”

**Michael Peel, Southern Arizona Director, Local First Arizona:** "Local First Arizona is proud to be involved in the Arizona Thrives task force to create a more integrated and collaborative approach to sustainability solutions for local businesses and communities, implementing best practices across the network, aligning on key performance indicators, and taking climate action through cross-sector coordination. We are optimistic that larger goals can be achieved collectively for a stronger, more diverse, inclusive and resilient economy across Arizona."