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Avoid shams that foil masterpiece

Apr. 2, 2006 12:00 AM

Superstition Vistas could be a headline-grabbing model project, with innovative solutions to challenges like transportation.

It could raise billions of dollars for Arizona schools, because this property in northern Pinal County is state trust land, with revenues earmarked for education.

It could happen . . .

If voters approve Conserving Arizona's Future, a citizens initiative headed for the November ballot.

If the state Senate refuses to muddy the waters with a rival ballot measure, House Concurrent Resolution 2045.

The Arizona Constitution's rules for managing trust land date back nearly a century and are woefully out of date.

The State Land Department, which oversees trust land, is severely limited in its ability to develop urban property.

Yet the profits are far higher if land isn't sold wholesale.

For instance, the department made \$12,000 an acre on raw land at Grayhawk in the northeast Valley, while a more developed parcel at nearby Desert Ridge recently went for more than \$1 million an acre.

Conserving Arizona's Future would give the Land Department some of the flexibility, legal tools and resources that developers have. It would create effective ways to preserve trust land with stellar scenic, cultural, wildlife and recreational values, such as the foothills of the Superstitions.

Yet the State House of Representatives approved a sham reform, HCR 2045, with the aim of derailing the initiative.

The Senate should say "no."

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