

# BULLETIN 19-11

**Legislative Committee on Public Lands  
(NRS 218E.510)**



**Legislative Counsel Bureau**

**JANUARY 2019**



## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS

*Nevada Revised Statutes 218E.510*

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Senator Pete Goicoechea  
Senator Donald (Don) G. Gustavson  
Senator David R. Parks  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<i>Nevada Revised Statutes</i> 218E.510.....	iii
Executive Summary .....	1
Summary of Recommendations .....	3
I.    Introduction.....	6
II.   Background.....	7
III.  Discussion of Testimony and Recommendations.....	10
IV.  Suggested Legislation .....	17



*Nevada Revised Statutes 218E.510*

**NRS 218E.510 Creation; membership; budget; officers; terms; vacancies; alternates.**

1. There is hereby established a Legislative Committee on Public Lands consisting of four members of the Senate, four members of the Assembly and one elected officer representing the governing body of a local political subdivision, appointed by the Legislative Commission with appropriate regard for their experience with and knowledge of matters relating to public lands. The members who are Legislators must be appointed to provide representation from the various geographical regions of the State.

2. The Legislative Commission shall review and approve the budget and work program for the Committee and any changes to the budget or work program.

3. The members of the Committee shall select a Chair from one House and a Vice Chair from the other House. Each Chair and Vice Chair holds office for a term of 2 years commencing on July 1 of each odd-numbered year. If a vacancy occurs in the office of Chair or Vice Chair, the members of the Committee shall select a replacement for the remainder of the unexpired term.

4. Any member of the Committee who is not a candidate for reelection or who is defeated for reelection continues to serve after the general election until the next regular or special session convenes.

5. Vacancies on the Committee must be filled in the same manner as original appointments.

6. The Legislative Commission may appoint alternates for members of the Committee. The Chair of the Committee:

(a) May designate an alternate appointed by the Legislative Commission to serve in place of a regular member who is unable to attend a meeting; and

(b) Shall appoint an alternate who is a member of the same House and political party as the regular member to serve in place of the regular member if one is available.

(Added to NRS by 1979, 5; A 1983, 209; [1985, 589](#); [2009, 1150,1561](#); [2011, 3224](#))—  
(Substituted in revision for NRS 218.5363)





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Legislative Committee on Public Lands is a permanent committee of the Nevada Legislature created in 1983. [Chapter 218E](#) of NRS sets forth the Committee's authority and duties.

Nevada's Legislative Committee on Public Lands monitors natural resource and public lands matters crucial to the state's economy, lifestyles, and traditions. The Committee considers a wide range of subjects, covering all facets of forest and range science, methods of public land management and oversight, public services, resources associated with public lands, rural infrastructure, and water resources. Because most of Nevada's lands (more than 85 percent) are under federal management, issues associated with public lands are an important topic for the Nevada Legislature.

The Committee held six meetings during the 2017–2018 Interim. The meetings took place in the following cities in Nevada: Battle Mountain, Carson City, Hawthorne, Las Vegas, Laughlin, and Pioche.

The Committee received presentations and discussed reports from numerous agencies, individuals, local community representatives, and organizations, including:

- The Nevada State Office and several district offices of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Department of the Interior (DOI);
- The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and several ranger districts and recreation areas of the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture;
- The Bureau of Reclamation, DOI, Lower Colorado River area;
- The southern Nevada office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DOI;
- Representatives from Clark, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Mineral, Nye, Pershing, and White Pine Counties;
- Nellis Air Force Base;
- Hawthorne Army Depot Base;
- The Colorado River Commission of Nevada;
- Various water authorities and districts including the Carson Water Subconservancy District, the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority, the Southern Nevada Water Authority, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the Virgin Valley Water District, and the Walker River Irrigation District;

- Nevada’s Office of the State Engineer, Division of Water Resources, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (SDCNR);
- Division of State Lands, SDCNR;
- Division of State Parks, SDCNR;
- Nevada Farm Bureau Federation;
- Nevada Pinyon-Juniper Partnership;
- Nevada Mining Association;
- Nevada’s Department of Wildlife;
- Nevada’s Division of Minerals, Commission on Mineral Resources;
- Conservation groups including the Bi-State Partnership, Friends of Gold Butte and Friends of Basin and Range National Monuments, Friends of Nevada Wilderness, Nevada Association of Conservation Districts, Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko, The Nature Conservancy, and Walker Basin Conservancy;
- Community and economic development specialists from the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension; and
- Several rural economic development authorities.

At its final meeting and work session, the Committee approved ten proposals for drafting legislation, six proposals for letters, and seven proposals for position statements to be included in its final report. The topics addressed at the work session included:

- Biomass management;
- General public lands issues;
- Water resources;
- Wildfires; and
- Wildlife.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This summary presents the recommendations approved by the Legislative Committee on Public Lands during the 2017–2018 Legislative Interim at the Committee’s final meeting held on September 7, 2018, in Carson City, Nevada. The bill draft requests (BDRs) will be forwarded to the Legislative Commission for transmittal to the 80<sup>th</sup> Session of the Nevada Legislature.

### Recommendations for Legislation

1. Request the drafting of a bill to provide for an interim study regarding the growing wildfire danger and issues in Nevada. Topics to be addressed by the interim study include, but are not limited to, wildfire fuels reduction and early response issues. **(BDR R–509)**
2. Request the drafting of a bill to provide that in the event the Office of the State Engineer, Division of Water Resources, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, issues an order that would curtail existing domestic wells, instead of receiving no water, an owner of an existing domestic well must still be allowed a duty of 0.5 acre feet of water, provided a meter is installed on the well. **(BDR 48–504)**
3. Request the drafting of a resolution supporting [H.R. 4647](#) (Recovering America’s Wildlife Act), 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, introduced by United States Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-Nebraska). House Bill 4647 implements the [recommendations](#) of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources to provide funding for wildlife conservation as prioritized within state wildlife action plans. **(BDR R–507)**
4. Request the drafting of a bill to require the SDCNR to create, by regulation, a competitive grant program for purpose of providing funds to be used by local communities and conservation groups for the matching of federal funds and provide an appropriation of \$500,000 for that purpose. **(BDR 26–510)**
5. Request the drafting of a bill to require the Office of Historic Preservation, SDCNR, to establish a historic sites passport program. **(BDR 33–505)**
6. Request the drafting of a bill to appropriate funds for five members of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands (including one legislator from each house and party and the local government representative) and one member of its staff to travel to Washington, D.C., and meet with the federal delegation. **(BDR –508)**
7. Request the drafting of a resolution opposing any potential elimination of the Nevada State Office of the BLM, DOI. **(BDR R–506)**
8. Request the drafting of a bill revising provisions related to public lands. **(BDR –511)**
9. Request the drafting of a bill revising provisions related to public lands. **(BDR –512)**
10. Request the drafting of a bill revising provisions related to public lands. **(BDR –513)**

## **Recommendations for Committee Letters**

11. Send a letter to the Office of the State Engineer encouraging the Division of Water Resources to complete adjudication of water basins in order to help bring finality to claims to water and reduce conflicts.
12. Send a letter to the federal delegation supporting [H.R. 4647](#) (Recovering America's Wildlife Act), 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, introduced by United States Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-Nebraska). H.R. 4647 implements the [recommendations](#) of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources to provide funding for wildlife conservation as prioritized within state wildlife action plans.
13. Send a letter to the Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network (NNCC) indicating the Committee's support of a Nevada policy prioritizing community-based conservation of public lands that integrates local knowledge of natural resources. The purpose of the letter is to underscore the Committee's acknowledgement of the importance of creating and maintaining partnerships between local stakeholders, private landowners, and vested interest groups in collaboration with federal, state, county, local, and private land managers in a shared effort to maintain thriving ecosystems and the associated wildlife, communities, and economies they support.
14. Send a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and the Governor of the State of Nevada, that recognizes the irreplaceable biological, cultural, recreational, and scenic value of the Ruby Mountains to Nevadans; emphasizes the importance of public involvement in the decision making process; and opposes any leasing of areas within the Ruby Mountains for oil and gas development.
15. Send a letter to the Nevada State Office of the BLM urging it to seek additional resources and staffing for the Ely District Office to implement completed watershed restoration plans. Watershed restoration projects are needed to restore vegetative health, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in various locations within the Ely District.
16. Send a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Energy, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), urging the DOE not to move forward with its proposal to store weapons-grade plutonium at the Nevada National Security Site without fully evaluating the economic, environmental, health, and safety impact on Nevada.

## **Recommendations for Position Statements in Final Report**

17. Include a position statement in the final report expressing the Committee's support of efforts to implement landscape scale projects utilizing pinyon-juniper woodland biomass in a way that benefits economic stability, energy production, hydrologic function, rangeland health, and wildlife habitat.

18. Include a position statement in the final report calling for local government land-use plans to be based on identified sustainable water resources and for coordination between local governments and the Office of the State Engineer to assure there is an accurate accounting of water needed for all future land developments.
19. Include a position statement in the final report expressing the Committee's support for the exploration of desalination technology and options as a water resource for Nevada.
20. Include a position statement in the final report expressing the Committee's support for continued funding of cloud seeding activities in Nevada as a longer-term water management tool to enhance snowfall from winter storms and increase the snowpack and runoff water in several rivers across Nevada.
21. Include a position statement in the final report expressing the Committee's support for continued funding for competitive "Drought Initiative" grants administered by the State Department of Agriculture to implement projects that improve water efficiency for agricultural and livestock production including, but not limited to, installing new equipment or technology, implementing best management practices, laser leveling, and riparian improvement (planting soil stabilizers, leaching/run-off control).
22. Include a position statement in the final report expressing the Committee's support of thoughtful examination prior to any retirement of grazing permits on federal land.
23. Include a position statement in the final report encouraging Congress to make payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) a mandatory, fully funded program. The purpose of the statement is to express that the Committee finds that because local governments are unable to tax the property values or products derived from federal lands, PILT payments are necessary to support essential local government services. The provision of services by local governments requires predictable full funding of PILT.

## I. INTRODUCTION

As the state with the highest percentage of federally managed lands in the country, Nevada has always faced challenges regarding its public lands. The Legislative Committee on Public Lands is a permanent committee of the Nevada Legislature and was created in 1983. [Chapter 218E](#) of NRS sets forth the Committee's authority and duties in [NRS 218E.500 through 218E.525](#).

The Committee is responsible for reviewing and commenting on existing and proposed laws, policies, and regulations affecting federally managed lands—which make up over 85 percent of the state's land area—and reviewing the activities of the Colorado River Commission (CRC), and public water authorities, districts, and systems. The Committee also provides a forum for the discussion of matters relating to the conservation, disposal, management, preservation, and use of public lands with federal, state, and local officials; representatives of special interest organizations; the public; and others.

Pursuant to [NRS 218E.510](#), the Legislative Commission appoints the Committee members with appropriate regard for their knowledge of public lands. The appointed legislators must represent the various geographical areas of the state. The members of the Committee elect a chair and vice chair, who each serve a two-year term commencing on July 1 of every odd-numbered year. At the Committee's first meeting, on January 12, 2018, in Las Vegas, Assemblywoman Heidi Swank was elected chair and Senator Julia Ratti was elected vice chair of the Committee.

The Committee held six meetings during the 2017–2018 Interim. [Meetings](#) were held in Battle Mountain, Carson City, Hawthorne, Las Vegas, Laughlin, and Pioche, Nevada.

In compliance with its broad directive, the Committee considered a wide range of topics related to public lands, including challenges to community economic development, land management, and water resource issues.

The Committee received numerous recommendations from presenters and the public at its first five meetings, and on June 7, 2018, the chair requested additional written recommendations be submitted to the Committee prior to its final meeting. Written recommendations received and considered by the Committee at its work session are included in the [Work Session Document](#).

At its final meeting and work session in Carson City on [September 7, 2018](#), the Committee approved ten proposals for drafting legislation, six proposals for [letters](#), and seven proposals for position statements to be included in its final report. The topics addressed at the work session included:

- Biomass management;
- General public lands issues;
- Water resources;

- Wildfires; and
- Wildlife.

More information about the Committee’s activities—including minutes, recordings of meetings, and copies of presentations and other exhibits—may be accessed on the Legislature’s website for the [2017–2018 Interim](#).

## II. BACKGROUND

A summary of presentations received by the Committee and links to each meeting follows:

### [January 12, 2018](#)—Las Vegas

- Overview of duties and responsibilities of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Southern Nevada Water Authority;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Colorado River Commission of Nevada;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, in Nevada;
- Overview of programs and activities of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of Agriculture, throughout Nevada and in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area; and
- Overview of programs and activities of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

### [April 6, 2018](#)—Laughlin

- Overview of impacts of public lands on economic development in Laughlin;
- Presentation regarding impacts of public lands on economic development in southern Nevada communities;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Bureau of Reclamation, DOI, in southern Nevada;
- Update on programs and activities of Nellis Air Force Base;
- Overview of programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DOI, in southern Nevada;
- Update on the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998, Gold Butte National Monument, Basin and Range National Monument, and other programs and activities of the BLM in southern Nevada;

- Update on programs and activities of Friends of Gold Butte and Friends of Basin and Range National Monuments; and
- Overview of the boating safety and enforcement program, raptor research program, and other programs and activities of Nevada’s Department of Wildlife (NDOW) in southern Nevada.

**May 18, 2018—Hawthorne**

- Overview of public lands activities and economic impacts on communities in Mineral and Nye Counties;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Hawthorne Army Depot Base;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Walker Basin Conservancy;
- Update on the Walker River State Recreation Area and other programs and activities of Nevada’s Division of State Lands and Division of State Parks, both of the SDCNR;
- Overview of sage-grouse conservation programs and activities of the Bi-State Partnership; and
- Update on programs and activities of:
  - Walker River Irrigation District;
  - Truckee-Carson Irrigation District;
  - Carson Water Subconservancy District;
  - Central Nevada Regional Water Authority; and
  - Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

**June 29, 2018—Pioche**

- Presentation regarding economic impacts of public lands on communities in central Nevada;
- Overview of public land activities and impacts on communities in Lincoln and White Pine Counties;
- Update on lithium exploration, abandoned mines, and other programs and activities of Nevada’s Division of Minerals, Commission on Mineral Resources;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Nevada Mineral Exploration Coalition;
- Overview of current issues in Nevada water law;



- Update on programs and activities of the USFS in central Nevada;
- Presentation regarding pinyon-juniper woodlands management and biomass utilization;
- Overview of programs and activities of Friends of Nevada Wilderness;
- Presentation regarding conservation districts, collaborative groups, and resource needs assessments in Nevada;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Nevada Farm Bureau Federation; and
- Overview of current issues pertaining to the Nevada Outfitters and Guides Association.

#### **July 26, 2018—Battle Mountain**

- Presentation regarding economic impacts of public lands on communities in northern Nevada;
- Overview of public lands activities and impacts in Lander County;
- Updates regarding public lands activities and impacts in Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, and Pershing Counties;
- Overview of programs and activities of the Nevada Mining Association;
- Update on BLM programs and activities in northern Nevada;
- Overview of USFS activities in northern Nevada;
- Overview of NDOW's programs and activities on public lands in northern Nevada;
- Overview of activities and projects of the Stewardship Alliance of Northeast Elko;
- Overview of activities by the Nature Conservancy on public lands in the sage systems of Nevada; and
- Update on programs and activities of the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority.

#### **September 7, 2018—Carson City**

- Work session (no presentations).

### III. DISCUSSION OF TESTIMONY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At its final meeting and work session on [September 7, 2018](#), the Legislative Committee on Public Lands considered a total of 23 proposed actions. Additional information regarding recommendations considered is available in the Committee's [Work Session Document](#).

#### A. Wildfires

##### *Recommendation 1*

Catastrophic wildfires are an increasing threat. More than 1,028,000 acres of land burned in Nevada wildfires in 2018. Testimony received at virtually every meeting of the Committee, as well as current events, indicated that wildfire danger in Nevada is an urgent and growing concern that requires cooperation between federal and state agencies, as well as local communities. In response, Chair Heidi Swank and Senator Pete Goicoechea recommended committee action to study wildfire issues, including fuels reduction practices and response issues.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of a [bill](#) to provide for an interim study regarding the growing wildfire danger and issues in Nevada. Topics to be addressed by the interim study include, but are not limited to, wildfire fuels reduction and early response issues. (BDR R-509)**

#### B. Biomass Management

##### *Recommendation 1*

Expanding, aging, and overgrown pinyon-juniper woodlands adversely affect ecosystem health and wildlife diversity and are highly susceptible to catastrophic fire. The importance of pinyon-juniper biomass management on public lands was discussed at the [May 18](#) meeting in Hawthorne, the [June 29](#) meeting in Pioche, and the [July 26](#) meeting in Battle Mountain. Various presenters described the necessity of pinyon-juniper management for sage grouse habitat, wildfire risk reduction, and rangeland health.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Include a position statement in its final report expressing the Committee's support of efforts to implement landscape scale projects utilizing pinyon-juniper woodland biomass in a way that benefits energy production, rangeland health, wildlife habitat, hydrologic function, and economic stability.**

## C. Water Resources

### *Recommendation 1*

As the most arid state in the country, conflicts regarding claims to Nevada's finite water resources are common. Recommendations received from several water authorities at the [May 18](#) meeting in Hawthorne and the [July 26](#) meeting in Battle Mountain indicated the need for completion of water basin adjudications by the Office of the State Engineer. The Committee found that the completion of remaining basin adjudications is necessary to help reduce conflicts and bring finality to adverse claims to water.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Send a [letter](#) to the Office of the State Engineer encouraging the Division of Water Resources, SDCNR, to complete adjudication of water basins in order to help bring finality to claims to water and reduce conflicts.**

### *Recommendation 2*

The Committee received testimony and a written recommendation from the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority regarding the need for local government land-use plans to be based upon identified water resources. Testimony indicated that many local government land-use plans have been developed without adequate consideration of the amount and source of water needed to implement the plans. Nevada has a finite sustainable water supply for its communities and ecosystems and, therefore, local land-use plans should be based on identified sustainable water resources needed for future development.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Include a position statement in its final report calling for local government land-use plans to be based on identified sustainable water resources and for coordination between local governments and the Office of the State Engineer to assure there is an accurate accounting of water needed for all future land developments.**

### *Recommendation 3*

According to testimony and a written recommendation received by the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority, significant advances in technology have made desalination a viable potential sustainable water resource for the state.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Include a position statement in its final report expressing the Committee's support for the exploration of desalination technology and options as a water resource for Nevada.**

#### *Recommendation 4*

The Committee received written recommendations from the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority and the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority indicating that cloud seeding activities are a successful long-term water management tool and increase the overall snowpack within a watershed by approximately 10 percent per year. The recommendations indicated that the proposed mature program completed with level funding through 2020–2021 is expected to result in an increase of approximately 76,300 acre-feet of water at a cost of about \$9 per acre-foot.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Include a position statement in its final report expressing the Committee’s support for continued funding of cloud seeding activities in Nevada as a long-term water management tool to enhance snowfall from winter storms and increase the snowpack and runoff water in several rivers across Nevada.**

#### *Recommendation 5*

Written recommendations received from the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority and the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority indicated that under competitive “Drought Initiative” grants, approximately \$500,000 was appropriated for the current biennium. The grants have reportedly successfully resulted in the implementation of projects that improve water efficiency for agriculture and livestock production.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Include a position statement in its final report expressing the Committee’s support for continued funding for competitive “Drought Initiative” grants administered by the State Department of Agriculture to implement projects that improve water efficiency for agricultural and livestock production including, but not limited to, installing new equipment or technology, implementing best management practices, laser leveling, and riparian improvement (planting soil stabilizers, leaching/run-off control).**

#### *Recommendation 6*

Testimony received by the state engineer and discussion with Committee members at the [June 29](#) Pioche meeting indicated that domestic wells generally have the most junior priorities in the state. Therefore, under Nevada’s system of prior appropriation, if the state engineer were to order a curtailment by priority, domestic well owners could be left without any water. The Committee was very concerned about this potential result.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of a [bill](#) to provide that in the event the Office of the State Engineer issues an order that would curtail existing domestic wells, instead of receiving no water, an**

**owner of an existing domestic well must still be allowed a duty of 0.5 acre-feet of water, provided a meter is installed on the well. (BDR 48–504)**

#### **D. Wildlife**

##### *Recommendation 1*

Discussion between Committee members and NDOW at several meetings, including the July 26 meeting in Battle Mountain, indicated that [recommendations](#) of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources to provide funding for wildlife conservation as prioritized within state wildlife action plans had been implemented in the bipartisan [H.R. 4647](#) (Recovering America’s Wildlife Act), 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, introduced by U.S. Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-Nebraska). The Committee was advised that the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel would result in the State of Nevada receiving more than \$27 million annually to manage, protect, and conserve wildlife and implement the Nevada Wildlife Action Plan.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of a [resolution](#) supporting H.R. 4647, which implements the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources to provide funding for wildlife conservation as prioritized within state wildlife action plans. (BDR R–507)**

##### *Recommendation 2*

In addition to requesting a resolution, the Committee desired to immediately urge the support of Nevada’s federal delegation for H.R. 4647.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Send a [letter](#) to the federal delegation supporting H.R. 4647, which implements the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources to provide funding for wildlife conservation as prioritized within state wildlife action plans.**

#### **E. Public Lands Generally**

##### *Recommendation 1*

Testimony at several Committee [meetings](#), especially at the July 26 meeting in Battle Mountain, as well as written recommendations received from the Eureka County Board of Commissioners, indicated that retirement of grazing permits on federally administered lands can have significant economic and lifestyle impacts on certain rural Nevada communities.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Include a position statement in its final report expressing the Committee's support of thoughtful examination prior to any retirement of grazing permits on federal land.**

*Recommendation 2*

At several of its [meetings](#), including the May 18 Hawthorne, June 29 Pioche, and July 26 Battle Mountain meetings, the Committee received testimony from various groups involved in successful community-based conservation efforts throughout Nevada as part of the Nevada Collaborative Conservation Network (NCCN). These groups stressed the importance of partnerships between local landowners and stakeholders in collaboration with federal, state, and local agencies for successful conservation.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Send a [letter](#) to the NCCN indicating the Committee's support of a Nevada policy prioritizing community-based conservation of public lands that integrates local knowledge of natural resources. The purpose of the letter is to underscore the Committee's acknowledgement of the importance of creating and maintaining partnerships between local stakeholders, private landowners, and vested interest groups in collaboration with federal, state, county, local, and private land managers in a shared effort to maintain thriving ecosystems and the associated wildlife, communities, and economies that they support.**

*Recommendation 3*

Throughout the interim, the Committee heard from concerned citizens and the Center for Biological Diversity regarding the potential for areas within the Ruby Mountains to be made available for oil and gas development. The Committee also received testimony at the July 26 Battle Mountain meeting indicating the USFS did not provide public meetings regarding the proposal.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Send a [letter](#) to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and the governor of the State of Nevada that recognizes the irreplaceable biological, cultural, recreational, and scenic value of the Ruby Mountains to Nevadans; emphasizes the importance of public involvement in the decision making process; and opposes any leasing of areas within the Ruby Mountains for oil and gas development.**

*Recommendation 4*

A written recommendation received from the Lincoln County Regional Development Authority indicated the need for the Nevada State Office of the BLM to implement completed watershed restoration plans in various locations within the Ely District to restore vegetative health, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Send a [letter](#) to the Nevada State Office of the BLM urging it to seek additional resources and staffing for the Ely District Office to implement completed watershed restoration plans. Watershed restoration projects are needed to restore vegetative health, improve wildlife habitat, and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in various locations within the Ely District.**

*Recommendation 5*

At virtually every [meeting](#) of the Committee, testimony was received from the public, conservation groups, and local officials regarding the fact that federal funds may be available to help meet the needs of communities; however, they require matching funds. Obtaining these funds can be a significant challenge.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of a [bill](#) to require the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to create, by regulation, a competitive grant program for purposes of providing funds to be used by local communities and conservation groups for the matching of federal funds and provide an appropriation of \$500,000 for that purpose. (BDR 26–510)**

*Recommendation 6*

At the June 29 Pioche [meeting](#), Chair Swank and several members of the Committee and the public discussed their desire to creatively encourage visitation and appreciation of Nevada’s historic sites.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of a [bill](#) to require the State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Historic Preservation, SDCNR, to establish a historic sites passport program. (BDR 33–505)**

*Recommendation 7*

The Committee heard from numerous county representatives, especially at the [May 18](#) Hawthorne, [June 29](#) Pioche, and [July 26](#) Battle Mountain meetings, about the need for reliable and predictable payment in lieu of taxes payments to support essential local services in their rural communities. Testimony indicated that because local governments are unable to tax the property values or products derived from federal lands, PILT payments are necessary to support essential local government services.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Include a position statement in its final report encouraging Congress to make PILT a mandatory and fully funded program. The purpose of the statement is to express that the Committee finds that because local governments are unable to tax the property values or**

**products derived from federal lands, PILT payments are necessary to support essential local government services. The provision of services by local governments requires predictable full funding of PILT.**

*Recommendation 8*

At the [May 18](#) Hawthorne and [July 26](#) Battle Mountain meetings, the Committee discussed the need for committee members to travel to Washington D.C. to discuss public land policy and challenges with Nevada's federal delegation.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of a [bill](#) to appropriate funds for five members of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands (including four legislators-one legislator from each house and party-and the local government representative) and one staff member to travel to Washington D.C. and meet with the federal delegation. (BDR -508)**

*Recommendation 9*

The [July 26](#) meeting in Battle Mountain included discussion of a proposed reorganization by the Department of the Interior. The reorganization would reportedly establish 12 unified regions for all of the DOI's bureaus instead of the existing structure, which includes 49 different regions. Although it was noted that the planned reorganization had not yet specified action for the Nevada State Office of the BLM, members expressed interest in opposing any potential dismantling of that office.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of a [resolution](#) opposing any potential elimination of the Nevada State Office of the BLM. (BDR R-506)**

*Recommendation 10*

The day prior to the Committee's final meeting and [work session](#), the chair of the Committee learned of a U.S. Department of Energy proposal to transport and store up to one metric ton of weapons-grade plutonium at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). At the work session, the chair informed the Committee of her concern that the substantial potential impacts on Nevada had not been adequately analyzed.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Send a [letter](#) to the U.S. Secretary of Energy, DOE, urging the DOE not to move forward with its proposal to store weapons-grade plutonium at the NNSS without fully evaluating the economic, environmental, health, and safety impact on Nevada.**



### *Recommendation 11*

At the conclusion of the Committee's work session, the members discussed their desire to allow Chair Swank and Senator Goicoechea to work together to request the drafting of three additional legislative measures regarding public lands.

Therefore, the Committee voted to:

**Request the drafting of three bills revising provisions related to public lands. (BDR –511, BDR –512, and BDR –513)**

#### **IV. SUGGESTED LEGISLATION**

The following bill draft requests\* will be available during the 2019 Legislative Session at the following website: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/BDRs/List>.

- BDR 48–504 Revises provisions relating to water.
- BDR 33–505 Requires the creation of an historic sites passport program.
- BDR R–506 \_JR: Expresses the opposition of the Nevada Legislature to the elimination of the Nevada office of the Bureau of Land Management.
- BDR R–507 \_JR: Expresses the support of the Nevada Legislature for the federal Recovering America's Wildlife Act.
- BDR –508 Makes an appropriation for members of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands to attend informational tours in Washington, D.C.
- BDR R–509 \_CR: Directs the Legislative Commission to appoint an interim study concerning wildfires.
- BDR 26–510 Establishes a program to provide matching funds to assist in obtaining certain federal grants
- BDR –511 Revises provisions relating to public lands issues.
- BDR –512 Revises provisions relating to public lands issues.
- BDR –513 Revises provisions relating to public lands issues.

\*The following explains the number or letter preceding the dash in the BDR number that is assigned by the Legal Division during the drafting process:

- BDR 40-368 A number denotes the NRS Title (i.e., Title 40), which encompasses the main subject of the bill draft.
- BDR R-369 The letter “R” denotes the bill draft is a resolution.
- BDR S-370 The letter “S” denotes the bill draft is a special act.