

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS

Nevada Revised Statutes 218E.510

This summary presents the recommendations approved by the Legislative Committee on Public Lands during the 2013–2014 Legislative Interim at its second meeting held on March 24, 2014, in Winnemucca, Nevada, and at its final meeting on August 28, 2014, in Carson City, Nevada. The bill draft requests (BDRs) will be forwarded to the Legislative Commission for transmittal to the 78th Session of the Nevada Legislature in 2015.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LEGISLATION

1. **Draft a legislative resolution** supporting the State Plan developed by the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (SDCNR), to ensure sagebrush habitats are conserved and managed in accordance with the State Plan and in coordination with local government plans, policies, and actions. The resolution should express support for the State Plan and urge the federal government not to list the sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. **(BDR –480)**
2. **Request the drafting of a bill** to create a statewide committee consisting of all water authorities, the Colorado River Commission of Nevada, and the Division of Water Resources (DWR), SDCNR, to study current and future water supply and allocation levels in Nevada, including the State’s capabilities and need to measure annual pumpage amounts, water resource budgets, and annual groundwater levels. The study should result in sufficient data that can be used to create a long-term statewide water plan and water supply program. **(BDR –481)**
3. **Request the drafting of a bill** amending Chapter 519A (“Reclamation of Land Subject to Mining Operations or Exploration Projects”) of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS), and other chapters of NRS as appropriate, to require that applicants to Nevada’s Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) seeking a waiver from mine reclamation regarding pit lakes be required to demonstrate that they hold a water right covering pit lake evaporation as a condition of approval of said waiver. **(BDR –482)**
4. **Request the drafting of a bill** to appropriate at least \$300,000 for a grant or grants to support cloud seeding activities in Nevada, giving preference to grant applicants who offer matching funds. **(BDR –483)**
5. **Request the drafting of a bill** to amend Chapter 244 (“Counties: Government”) of NRS, to create nonprofit Rangeland Fire Protection Associations in each county. **(BDR –484)**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMITTEE ACTION:
COMMITTEE LETTERS**

6. **Send a letter** to the Director, United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), to invite the Director to a future meeting of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands to discuss land management issues. The letter should also include a summary of witness comments made during a meeting concerning grazing reductions on public lands.
7. **Send a letter** to the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Department of Agriculture; the Forest Supervisor of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest; the Director of the BLM; and the Nevada State Director, BLM, encouraging the USFS and the BLM to promote and develop a system to allow more private citizens to cut Pinyon-juniper within defined limits in USFS and BLM designated areas without a permit.
8. **Send a letter** to the Chairs of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, Nevada's Congressional Delegation, and the Secretary of the DOI urging action to provide adequate resources to fully implement the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act (WH&B) of 1971, including the necessary funding to determine appropriate management levels as required in the Act.
9. **Send a letter** to Nevada's Attorney General requesting that Nevada consider joining the Nevada Association of Counties' legal challenge to compel the BLM to manage wild horse and burro herds as required by federal law under the WH&B Act and subsequent amendments.
10. **Send a letter** encouraging the BLM, the USFS, and grazing permittees to pursue efforts to ensure that: (1) management decisions are based upon the best rangeland science; (2) flexibility is built into grazing permits to allow for adaptive management as issues and concerns arise; and (3) the quality and quantity of data collected can support all decisions made based on clear and measureable resource objectives. Additionally, the letter should urge that before imposing grazing restrictions or seeking changes in livestock levels or seasons of permittee use, federal agencies, in coordination with grazing permittees, must identify and implement: (1) all economically and technically feasible livestock distribution; (2) forage production enhancements; (3) weed control programs; (4) prescribed grazing systems; (5) off-site water development by water rights holders; (6) shrub and Pinyon-juniper control; (7) salting and supplemental plans; (8) the establishment of riparian pastures; and (9) herding. The letter should further note that federal agencies, in coordination with grazing permittees, must assure that all grazing management actions and strategies fully consider the impacts on property rights holders and adjacent private landowners and consider the potential impacts of such actions on grazing animal health and productivity.

11. **Send a letter** to the Chairs of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance expressing continued support for enhanced funding for the DWR to process the backlog of water rights applications and to improve online data sources.
12. **Send a letter** to the Chief of the USFS and the Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, urging no further delay in approving and investing in water-related range improvements, notwithstanding USFS concerns with Nevada's water law concerning stock water rights.
13. **Send a letter** to NDEP requesting the reconsideration of the beneficial use designation of the Humboldt River. Testimony noted that NDEP's designation of the Humboldt River for municipal drinking water use results in an inappropriately high water quality standard.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMITTEE ACTION:
STATEMENTS IN THE FINAL REPORT**

14. **Include a statement** in the final report supporting the streamlining of federal and State permitting activities on public lands, provided that such streamlining preserves necessary community and natural resource protections.