

NEVADA'S LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS

(Nevada Revised Statutes 218.5363)

RESOLUTION NO. 06-02

Urging Continued Negotiations and Cooperation in Efforts to Save and Protect Walker Lake and Preserve the Walker River System

WHEREAS, The Legislative Committee on Public Lands has monitored Walker Lake and Walker River issues for many years; and

WHEREAS, Walker Lake is a freshwater lake located in west central Nevada fed by snowmelt from nearby mountain ranges; and

WHEREAS, Walker Lake draws a considerable number of tourists to the region, holds tremendous cultural, historical, and spiritual importance to the Walker River Paiute Tribe, and functions as an economic mainstay for Mineral County; and

WHEREAS, Walker Lake, serving as the terminus of the Walker River System, is one of the world's few saline lakes that are capable of supporting a freshwater trout fishery; although in recent years with diminishing lake levels, the viability of the hatchery has become questionable; and

WHEREAS, The volume of Walker Lake has declined by 75 percent since the late 1800s and this continuing decrease is creating high concentrations of dissolved solids which are extremely detrimental and ultimately toxic to fish; and

WHEREAS, The Walker River System is part of a very diverse ecosystem and serves as the primary water source for major agricultural interests in Lyon County; and

WHEREAS, The inherent conflicts between upstream users, Walker Lake preservation groups, and the Walker River Paiute Tribe have manifested over the past 20 years as lake levels continue to decline and its viability diminishes; and

WHEREAS, Various groups seeking to preserve Walker Lake, individuals and organizations representing upstream farmers and ranchers, members of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, Nevada's Congressional Delegation and their representatives, and numerous federal, state, and local governmental agencies have engaged in ongoing talks, negotiations, studies, and planning exercises to address growing concerns that Walker Lake may eventually cease to support aquatic life and "die"; and

WHEREAS, These discussions have lead to often contentious debate regarding the future of the lake and the sustainability of important agricultural upstream areas; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY NEVADA'S LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS, That the Committee hereby urges all parties directly involved in Walker Lake and Walker River negotiations to continue working together to find solutions to preserve and protect the lake and the river system; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Committee on Public Lands hereby encourages these organizations and individuals to be innovative and creative in this endeavor and continue seeking support from Congressional leaders, federal, state, and local governments, sportsman's groups, and landowners in the Walker River Basin.