SB358 Bill Remarks

Good afternoon Madame Chair, and members of the committee. I’m Senator Chris Brooks from District 3 in Clark County.

In 2018, the voters of Nevada decisively advanced, by a 60-40% margin, Question 6 – a constitutional amendment that would move our State towards a 50 percent Renewable Portfolio Standard. If approved again in 2020, it would become a part of the state’s constitution.

I am introducing Senate Bill 358 in the spirit of this ballot initiative. It declares that this Legislature is committed to a robust renewable portfolio standard and establishes a more comprehensive ramp-up to 50% within the next decade.

I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again: climate change is one of the most serious emergencies that our state, our country, and our planet are facing. **Greenhouse gas emissions caused by fossil fuels are helping to drive this.** A strong RPS in Nevada has already led to decreased greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity sector. Fighting for a more sustainable future has been the focus of my career – and we have to give this effort everything that we have. The industries that help drive our economy, including tech companies, data centers, and convention centers demand it. The same goes for the millions of tourists who come into this State and the other nations that we partner with on an economic basis.

29 states, including Nevada, have already set RPS frameworks – and many of those are far more aggressive than this measure. With this bill, we have the opportunity to try to catch up with those
States who are leading the way. And let us be clear: it will not be hard for Nevada to accomplish this goal. We receive a lot more sunshine than most other parts of the country, have plenty of opportunities for geothermal sources in our State, and we already have an existing hydropower infrastructure. Why wouldn’t we use our naturally endowed resources to create a better future for our children?

I would also call to mind that we have virtually no fossil fuels within our borders and have to import them from out-of-state to the tune of billions of dollars a year. Let’s keep that money in Nevada.

I appreciate the partnerships that I’ve forged with the Governor’s Office of Energy and Governor Sisolak himself in advocating for a robust renewable portfolio standard. I also want to thank NV Energy for their cooperation; along with environmental groups such as the Nevada Conservation League, Western Resource Advocates, the National Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, and each person who is here today in favor of SB358. And I truly appreciate the both the labor and business communities in Nevada. They’ve been at the table since day one in crafting this bill. Some of our biggest industries, including mining and resorts, have been instrumental in providing feedback.

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation. Joining me today are Bob Johnston, the Senior Staff Attorney for Western Resources Advocates, and Senior Scientist Dylan Sullivan from the National Resources Defense Council. I have included for your review
some slides that help demonstrate what this bill does. They are available to answer any questions. Thank you.