

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 1—Assemblyman Bache

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging Congress to authorize the withdrawal by the United States Air Force of the public land within the Nellis Air Force Range for an indefinite period subject to certain conditions.

WHEREAS, On November 6, 1986, the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1986 was enacted by Congress as Public Law 99-606; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the Act, approximately 3 million acres of public land located in southern and central Nevada are withdrawn from the public domain for use by the United States Air Force in military operations and other activities conducted on the Nellis Air Force Range; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to the Act, the land is withdrawn for 15 years and, in 2001, Congress may consider whether to renew the withdrawal of the land for use by the United States Air Force for a period to be determined by Congress; and

WHEREAS, The United States Air Force has indicated that it will request that the withdrawal of the land be renewed for use by the United States Air Force at the Nellis Air Force Range and that the period of withdrawal be for 25 years or an indefinite period; and

WHEREAS, The military operations conducted by the United States Air Force on the Nellis Air Force Range often involve the use of live ordnance and other materials that are hazardous to the environment of areas within the range; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 87 percent of the land in Nevada is managed and controlled by the Federal Government; and

WHEREAS, Nevada has in recent years experienced a tremendous increase in population, including areas located near the Nellis Air Force Range; and

WHEREAS, The increase in population has created a corresponding increase in the demand for land for public purposes, including, without limitation, land required for expansion and development of cities and towns in this state and for hunting, fishing, hiking and other recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 25 mining districts are located partially or entirely within the Nellis Air Force Range; and

WHEREAS, Because mining and exploration for minerals have been conducted in several of those districts since 1860, many valuable deposits of minerals and other substances have been identified within or near the Nellis Air Force Range, including deposits of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, mercury, tungsten, turquoise, sodium, potassium, alunite, potash and commercial grade sand, gravel and limestone; and

WHEREAS, Since approximately 1942, access to those deposits for mining or exploration has been limited or prohibited because of the withdrawal of the land for use by the United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, The Nellis Air Force Range is vitally important in protecting our national security and providing training for military operations and other

activities conducted by the United States Air Force on the Nellis Air Force Range; and

WHEREAS, The operations and activities conducted on the Nellis Air Force Range must be monitored and reviewed periodically to determine whether those operations and activities are necessary, and to consider the possibility of authorizing other uses of the public land within the range by residents of this state; and

WHEREAS, The Nellis Air Force Range has contributed significantly to the economy of this state, and the State of Nevada supports the use of the range for purposes directly related to the operation of the Nellis Air Force Base; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the Nevada Legislature hereby urges Congress to authorize the United States Air Force to withdraw the public land located within the Nellis Air Force Range indefinitely, provided that:

1. If the range or any portion thereof ceases to be used for such purposes, the range or that portion which is no longer used for such purposes would revert to the State of Nevada for economic development or other purposes that the state determines are compatible with the character of the land;

2. The Federal Government will be responsible for any environmental cleanup of the range that may be required;

3. The United States Air Force will provide periodic reports, every 5 years, to the Congress and the state, with continued public involvement and input, to:

- (a) Determine whether continued operation of the range is necessary;

- (b) Assess any damage to the environment of areas within the range; and

- (c) Consider the possibility of authorizing other uses of the public land within the range by residents of this state;

4. Congress reviews the indefinite withdrawal every 15 years without requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement; and

5. Congress does not authorize high-level radioactive waste to be stored temporarily or permanently at any location within the Nellis Air Force Range; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage and approval.

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