

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 7—Committee on
Natural Resources

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Directing the
Legislative Committee on Public Lands to continue the study
of wilderness areas and wilderness study areas in this state.

WHEREAS, The provisions of 16 U.S.C. §§ 1131 et seq., commonly referred to as the Wilderness Act, establish the National Wilderness Preservation System, which consists of areas of federal public land that are designated by Congress as wilderness areas; and

WHEREAS, Congress has designated approximately 2 million acres of certain federal public lands in Nevada as wilderness areas; and

WHEREAS, If an area of federal public land is designated as a wilderness area, it must be managed in a manner that preserves the wilderness character of the area and ensures that the area remains unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as a wilderness area; and

WHEREAS, A reasonable amount of wilderness area in this state provides for a diverse spectrum of recreational opportunities in Nevada, promotes tourism and provides a place for Nevadans to escape the pressures of urban growth; and

WHEREAS, In conjunction with the provisions of the Wilderness Act, the Bureau of Land Management of the Department of the Interior manages approximately 3.86 million acres of federal public lands in Nevada identified as wilderness study areas; and

WHEREAS, Until a wilderness study area is designated by Congress as a wilderness area or released, the wilderness study area must be managed in a manner that does not impair its suitability for preservation as a wilderness area; and

WHEREAS, Because approximately 2 million acres of federal public land in Nevada have been designated as wilderness areas and approximately 8.6 percent of the federal public land in Nevada that is managed by the Bureau of Land Management has been identified as wilderness study areas and because such designation or identification is believed to impose significant restrictions concerning the management and use of such land, including land used for mining, ranching and recreation, the Legislative Commission appointed a subcommittee in 2001 to conduct an interim study of wilderness areas and wilderness study areas in this state; and

WHEREAS, During the 2001-2002 legislative interim, the subcommittee met several times throughout this state and facilitated important and wide-ranging discussions among many agencies, organizations and persons with diverse interests, perspectives and

expertise concerning wilderness areas and wilderness study areas; and

WHEREAS, Although the subcommittee obtained valuable information concerning the selection, management and use of wilderness areas and wilderness study areas in this state, and although Congress recently enacted the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002, Public Law 107-282 (2002), which released approximately 224,000 acres in Clark County from its current status as a wilderness study area, additional study of these issues is still needed as a significant majority of the federal public land in Nevada that had been previously designated as a wilderness area or identified as a wilderness study area remains designated or identified as such; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the Legislative Committee on Public Lands is hereby directed to continue the study of wilderness areas and wilderness study areas in this state, and that the Legislative Commission is hereby directed to appoint two additional members of the Senate and two additional members of the Assembly who are representative of various geographical areas of this state to the Legislative Committee on Public Lands for the purposes of this study; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the study must include, without limitation:

1. An examination of the manner in which wilderness areas and wilderness study areas are selected, managed and used, and the laws, regulations and policies of the Federal Government relating to that selection, management and use;
2. Consideration of whether areas of this state are suitable for possible designation by Congress as wilderness areas; and
3. A review of any other issues or subjects concerning the establishment, management or use of a wilderness area or wilderness study area in this state, as deemed necessary by the subcommittee; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in conducting the study, the Legislative Committee on Public Lands shall seek input from various governmental agencies, organizations and persons concerning wilderness areas and wilderness study areas in this state; and be it further

RESOLVED, That any recommendations that result from the study relating to the manner in which Congress designates wilderness areas or identifies wilderness study areas must be submitted to each member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Legislative Committee on Public Lands shall submit a report of the results of the study and any

recommendations for legislation to the 73rd Session of the Nevada Legislature.