

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 15—
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

(ON BEHALF OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS)

MARCH 31, 2005

Referred to Committee on Natural Resources

SUMMARY—Commends participants in effort to prevent listing of sage grouse as threatened or endangered species and encourages continued conservation efforts. (BDR R-430)

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EXPLANATION – Matter in ***bolded italics*** is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Commending the participants in the successful effort to improve the conservation of and assist in preventing the listing of the sage grouse as a threatened or endangered species and encouraging the continuation of conservation efforts.

1 WHEREAS, In recent years, concern has been expressed
2 throughout the western United States, including the State of Nevada,
3 that the quality and quantity of the populations and habitat of the
4 sage grouse have been declining because of fires, invasion of
5 nonnative plants, urban sprawl, encroachment of pinion juniper into
6 sagebrush habitat, increased predation and other disturbances; and

7 WHEREAS, Between 1999 and 2004, eight petitions were filed
8 with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service requesting that the
9 sage grouse be listed as a threatened or endangered species under
10 the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, and as a result of the
11 petitions, an in-depth review of the status of the species was
12 initiated by the Service on April 15, 2004; and

13 WHEREAS, The listing of the sage grouse as a threatened or
14 endangered species posed a devastatingly negative impact on
15 Nevada's land development, land use, water use, mining,
16 recreational activities and local economies; and

17 WHEREAS, Recognizing the extent of the potential impact on
18 Nevada and the need for action to prevent it, Governor Guinn



1 appointed the Sage-Grouse Conservation Team in August 2000,
2 composed of 25 members who represented industry, Native
3 American tribal governments, conservation organizations, land-
4 managing agencies, Legislators and the field of biology, to address
5 concerns about the declining population of sage grouse in our State
6 and to create a proactive strategy of conservation that would lay the
7 framework for local groups to follow when establishing
8 conservation plans for their respective areas; and

9 WHEREAS, Beginning in the spring of 2002, six regional
10 planning teams, which eventually became seven, consisting of
11 experts from various backgrounds at the federal and local levels and
12 volunteers whose donation of nearly 9,300 hours is estimated at
13 more than \$300,000, began extensive monitoring efforts and
14 initiated regular meetings to develop local plans to improve
15 conservation of sage grouse populations before the species reached a
16 threshold of vulnerability from which recovery might be difficult;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, As the result of the coordinated efforts of the Sage-
19 Grouse Conservation Team and the regional planning teams, the
20 *Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan for Nevada and Eastern*
21 *California* was released in June 2004, containing an assessment of
22 sage grouse populations in Nevada, risk factors facing those
23 populations, strategies to reduce the risk factors, methods for
24 implementation of the strategies and monitoring mechanisms for the
25 effectiveness of the strategies; and

26 WHEREAS, The unprecedented and unique partnership
27 established to solve this critical problem of such local and statewide
28 significance serves as a model for future initiatives relating to
29 conservation issues that concern western states and sets a precedent
30 for accomplishing the resolution of such issues through regional
31 resource planning efforts and proactive steps instead of by
32 regulation; and

33 WHEREAS, The sage grouse population is not only of concern to
34 the State of Nevada and eastern California, but is also an issue for
35 10 other western states and for areas in two Canadian provinces,
36 which have published *Conserving the Greater Sage Grouse*, a
37 compilation of the state and local conservation efforts across the
38 entire sage grouse range; and

39 WHEREAS, On January 7, 2005, commending the "Federal and
40 state agencies as well as the local working groups for their current
41 efforts to maintain or improve sagebrush habitat" and encouraging
42 them to "continue to move forward with the new plans to develop
43 and implement conservation strategies throughout the grouse's
44 range," the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service
45 announced the final determination that the sage grouse would not be



1 placed on the list of threatened or endangered species; now,
2 therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE
4 ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the members of the 73rd Session of
5 the Nevada Legislature hereby recognize and commend the
6 Governor's Sage-Grouse Conservation Team, the federal, state and
7 local agencies, and the volunteers who collaborated on this project
8 for their successful effort in contributing to the prevention of the
9 listing of the sage grouse as a threatened or endangered species; and
10 be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Legislators of the State of Nevada hereby
12 acknowledge and express pride in the leadership that the State of
13 Nevada has exhibited in this matter in emphasizing negotiations
14 over the regulatory process and involving residents, governmental
15 agencies and resource specialists as decision-makers; and be it
16 further

17 RESOLVED, That the Legislature encourages all those involved
18 to contribute their efforts to implement and maintain the strategies
19 developed so that sage grouse populations and habitat can be
20 restored and an ecological crisis averted; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and
22 transmit a copy of this resolution to Governor Kenny Guinn, the
23 University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, and the Department of
24 Wildlife for distribution to the seven regional planning teams.



