

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 35—SENATOR TITUS

MAY 10, 2005

Referred to Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections

SUMMARY—Directs Legislative Commission to conduct interim study of measures needed to protect and maintain natural treasures of Nevada. (BDR R-1143)

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

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Directing the Legislative Commission to conduct an interim study of measures needed to protect and maintain the natural treasures of Nevada.

1 WHEREAS, Nevada exists in a high desert region of the western
2 United States displaying rugged snow-capped mountains, towering
3 alpine forests, deep azure lakes, rocky cliffs, dramatic canyons,
4 unexpected sand dunes and whitewater rivers and is one of the most
5 biologically diverse states of our Nation; and

6 WHEREAS, In 1992, the Nevada Natural Heritage Program
7 recognized over 100 locations in Nevada as areas with a multitude
8 of rare species, known as biodiversity hot spots, with many of these
9 species being endemic to a particular Nevada habitat; and

10 WHEREAS, The diverse landscape of northwest Nevada includes
11 the expansive volcanic plateaus of Sheldon, the glaciated peaks and
12 basins of Blue Lakes, the baked dry lake bed of the Black Rock
13 Desert and the starkly beautiful and mysterious Pyramid Lake; and

14 WHEREAS, The northeast corner of Nevada is defined by its
15 waters which carve canyons and create, in contrast to the arid
16 deserts that cover a large portion of the State, a spectacularly lush
17 oasis teeming with wildlife; and

18 WHEREAS, The mountainous terrain of eastern Nevada exhibits
19 such wonders as Wheeler Peak, the second highest mountain in
20 Nevada, which holds the only active glacier in the Great Basin, the
21 Lehman Caves, a major cave system with a fascinating wonderland
22 of limestone formations, Lexington Arch, a natural limestone arch
23 more than six stories high, stands of bristlecone pines, which are



1 among the world's oldest living organisms and can live for more
2 than 4,000 years, Cathedral Gorge with its unique formations of
3 circular shafts and steep spires carved by the erosion of soft
4 bentonite clay, and the Ruby Mountains, sometimes referred to as
5 the Nevada Alps, home to lush valleys, wildflower meadows, alpine
6 lakes, waterfalls, glacially formed canyons, including the dramatic
7 Lamoille Canyon and Chimney Rock; and

8 WHEREAS, With sections stretching from Lake Tahoe and Reno
9 south to the Las Vegas area, the Toiyabe National Forest is the
10 largest national forest outside Alaska and, with its wide range of
11 elevations combined with variable climates and soils, holds a wide
12 diversity of plant life, ranging from Joshua trees and creosote bushes
13 to bristlecone pines, and animal life, including mule deer, black
14 bear, mountain lion, bobcat, wild burros and horses, and
15 innumerable small mammals, reptiles and birds; and

16 WHEREAS, The area know as Mount Charleston is made up of
17 the 316,000-acre Spring Mountains National Recreation Area and
18 boasts the highest point in southern Nevada, Charleston Peak, which
19 looms over the desert floor of the Las Vegas Valley at an elevation
20 of 11,918 feet; and

21 WHEREAS, In the shadow of the Spring Mountain Range lie
22 multicolored sandstone formations, known as Red Rock Canyon,
23 replete with unique flora and a large number of animals including
24 the desert bighorn sheep, the official state animal of Nevada; and

25 WHEREAS, One of the Silver State's most startlingly beautiful
26 desert environments is the wind-sculpted sandstone of the Valley of
27 Fire State Park which sports colors from a deep red to a golden
28 orange that contrast with the sparkling white of the regal Silica
29 Dome also contained in the park; and

30 WHEREAS, Walker Lake, part of the remains of a prehistoric
31 lake which covered much of the western United States, contains
32 various native fish species that are vital to thousands of birds that
33 rely on the lake as a fueling and rest stop on their migratory routes,
34 including spring and fall visits from 1,400 common loons, the
35 largest known inland congregation west of the Mississippi, and is
36 rumored to be the home of Cecil the sea serpent; and

37 WHEREAS, Other amazing treasures of Nevada include the
38 fossilized remains of the prehistoric ichthyosaurs who ruled the
39 warm, shallow seas that covered Nevada during the late Triassic
40 Period, "singing" Sand Mountain which was created when sand
41 from surrounding flats, once part of the bottom of ancient Lake
42 Lahontan, was blown against nearby mountain walls to form a dune
43 rising 600 feet high and stretching for 2 miles, and the abundance of
44 geothermal resources that can be found throughout the State; and



1 WHEREAS, Nevada's vast and diverse landscape has always
2 been part of the State's history, people and wealth, and has provided
3 assets such as minerals, forage and fertile soil, as well as the
4 invaluable resources of clean water and air, abundant wildlife and
5 open space; and

6 WHEREAS, Thousands of different kinds of life call Nevada
7 home and hundreds of these live nowhere else, and the health and
8 economic well-being of our State depend directly upon wise
9 stewardship of its land and all the life it supports; and

10 WHEREAS, The challenge to make decisions in the best interest
11 of future generations of Nevadans increases as population and land-
12 use pressures grow, but with early planning and responsible
13 development, economic growth and our biological resources can
14 successfully exist side by side; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE
16 ASSEMBLY CONCURRING, That the Legislative Commission is
17 hereby directed to conduct an interim study of any measures
18 necessary for the protection and maintenance of Mount Charleston
19 and Walker Lake and any other area of the State the committee
20 appointed to conduct the study deems appropriate; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That the Legislative Commission shall submit a
22 report of the results of the study and any recommendations for
23 legislation to the 74th Session of the Nevada Legislature.



