

Senate Joint Resolution No. 1—Committee on
Natural Resources

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging the Nevada
Congressional Delegation and Congress to take certain
actions concerning wilderness areas and wilderness study
areas.

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 lands that are designated by Congress as wilderness areas; and

WHEREAS, Congress has designated approximately 2.8 million acres of 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, The provisions of the Wilderness Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. §§ 1701 et seq., provide for the study of certain areas of land to determine whether those areas, commonly known as wilderness study areas, are suitable for designation as a wilderness area; and

WHEREAS, In conjunction with the provisions of the Wilderness Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau of Land Management of the Department of the Interior in the late 1970s conducted an initial inventory of approximately 49 million acres of federal public lands in Nevada to determine the suitability of such lands for designation as wilderness areas or identification as wilderness study areas and, in 1980, recommended that approximately 5.1 million acres of those lands be identified as wilderness study areas; and

WHEREAS, Although Congress recently enacted the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 108-424, 118 Stat. 2403, pursuant to which approximately 768,000 acres have been given status as wilderness areas and approximately 251,000 acres have been released for multiple use under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau of Land Management continues to manage approximately 2.8 million acres of federal public lands in Nevada identified as wilderness study areas; and

WHEREAS, Decisions concerning whether to designate wilderness study areas as wilderness areas or release those areas for multiple use are important and must be made in a timely manner and without any unnecessary delays so that those lands which are suitable for designation as a wilderness area may be afforded full protection as such and those lands which are not suitable for designation as a wilderness area may be released for use and management for the public good as accorded by law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the Nevada Legislature urge the Nevada Congressional Delegation to work with all interested Nevadans, land managers, affected parties, local governments, special interest organizations and members of the public in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect to address issues concerning the designation of wilderness areas in Nevada; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the members of the Nevada Legislature urge Congress to take the following actions concerning wilderness areas and wilderness study areas:

1. As part of the legislative process for determining which federal lands should be designated as wilderness areas, and in accordance with stakeholder agreements, continue the policy of releasing federal lands that are a part of a wilderness study area for multiple use, and to continue the appropriate disposal of suitable federal lands for conversion to state or private lands, when the determination is made that those federal lands are unsuitable for designation as wilderness areas;

2. When determining whether to designate land as a wilderness area, carefully consider the requirements of existing and future military operations on the land and in the airspace over the land and make appropriate decisions based on those requirements; and

3. Support the adoption of a schedule for the timely consideration of a plan to release wilderness study areas that are found unsuitable for designation as wilderness areas; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate 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.