

Senate Joint Resolution No. 3—
Committee on Natural Resources

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging Congress to enact legislation requiring the Secretary of the Interior to convey ownership of certain land to the State of Nevada to help fund education in Nevada.

WHEREAS, The State of Nevada and other western states face unique challenges in providing the best education to their residents due to vast acreages of untaxable federal lands within their borders; and

WHEREAS, Early in Nevada's history, the Congress of the United States recognized the importance of supporting public education in Nevada and established school trust lands in Nevada to help fund education in the State; and

WHEREAS, When the Territory of Nevada was admitted to statehood, the Federal Government provided Nevada with two sections of land in each township for the benefit of common schools, which amounted to 3.9 million acres, while other territories that were subsequently admitted to statehood received four sections of land in each township for the benefit of common schools; and

WHEREAS, The land originally granted by the Federal Government to Nevada for common schools was not providing sufficient revenue for education because the land included large sections that were undesirable or difficult to survey; and

WHEREAS, In 1880, it was necessary for Nevada to agree to exchange its 3.9 million acres for only 2 million acres of its own selection, as Nevada had an immediate need for public school revenues; and

WHEREAS, The disproportionately small amount of land received from the Federal Government for the benefit of common schools contributes only a small amount of revenue for the schools in Nevada in comparison to other states and places an excessive burden on the financial resources of each county in Nevada; and

WHEREAS, In Nevada, approximately 87 percent of the land, which amounts to approximately 61 million acres, is held by the Federal Government; and

WHEREAS, In 15 of the 17 counties in Nevada, more than 50 percent of the land is held by the Federal Government, and in 4 of the 17 counties, more than 90 percent of the land is held by the Federal Government; and



WHEREAS, The ownership of such an extensive amount of the land in Nevada by the Federal Government has an adverse effect on the ability of the school districts in Nevada to provide funding for quality education for the residents of Nevada; and

WHEREAS, Nevada and the other western states are falling behind in education funding as measured by the growth of expenditures per pupil; and

WHEREAS, The difficulty experienced by Nevada and the other western states in providing a quality education to their residents is exacerbated by projections that enrollment in public schools from 2007 to 2019 is expected to increase by approximately 34 percent in Nevada and the other western states, but increase by less than 1 percent in the remaining states in the United States; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the 76th Session of the Nevada Legislature urge Congress and the Nevada Congressional Delegation to enact legislation requiring the Secretary of the Interior to convey ownership of federal land located in Nevada from the Federal Government to Nevada to help fund education for the residents of Nevada and to put the education system of Nevada in parity with that of the other states in the United States; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, 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.

