

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Seventy-sixth Session
March 2, 2011**

The Senate Committee on Natural Resources was called to order by Chair Mark A. Manendo at 3:35 p.m. on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, in Room 2144 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to the Greenhaw Tech Arts Building, Great Basin College, Room 118, Elko, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Mark A. Manendo, Chair
Senator David R. Parks, Vice Chair
Senator John J. Lee
Senator Dean A. Rhoads
Senator Michael Roberson

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michelle Van Geel, Policy Analyst
Charity Fowler, Counsel
Jodene Poley, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Patricia Mulroy, General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority
Mike Carrigan, Councilman, City of Sparks; Chair, Truckee Meadows Water Authority; Chair, Western Regional Water Commission
Mark Foree, P.E., General Manager, Truckee Meadows Water Authority
Rosemary Menard, Director, Department of Water Resources, Washoe County
Edwin James, General Manager, Carson Water Subconservancy District
Meghan Brown, Executive Director, Nevada Cattlemen's Association
Joseph Guild, Vice Chair, Federal Lands Committee, National Cattlemen's Beef Association
Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation
Kyle Davis, Political Director, Nevada Conservation League

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Daryl Capurro, Chair, Legislative Committee, Board of Wildlife Commissioners,
Department of Wildlife
Ken Mayer, Acting Director, Department of Wildlife
Larry Johnson, President, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife, Inc.
H. Bonnie Matton, President, Wild Horse Preservation League
J. Dean Baker, President, Baker Ranches, Inc.

CHAIR MANENDO:

We will open the meeting with a presentation by the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA).

PATRICIA MULROY (General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority):

The SNWA is governed by a seven-member agency consisting of Big Bend Water District, City of Boulder City, City of Henderson, City of Las Vegas, City of North Las Vegas, Clark County Water Reclamation District and the Las Vegas Valley Water District (Agency). The responsibilities of SNWA are to manage water supplies, implement conservation programs, build and operate wholesale facilities of water, enact long-term water resource planning initiatives and meet the water-quality standards required by the State and the federal government. I would like to direct you to the PowerPoint presentation "Southern Nevada Water Authority Water Overview: Southern Nevada's Water Resources, Demand and Challenges" ([Exhibit C](#)). The most important item I would like to discuss with you is the Colorado River system. This is a significant year for the Colorado River community. We have a chance of a slight recovery of water elevation in Lake Mead.

The Colorado River basin encompasses seven states: Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and New Mexico, identified as the Upper Basin states, and Arizona, California and Nevada, identified as the Lower Basin states. In 1922, these seven states entered into the Colorado River Compact (Compact). After signing the Compact, Congress enacted the Boulder Canyon Project Act. It was this legislation that authorized the construction of Hoover Dam and the Glen Canyon Dam, which created Lake Mead and Lake Powell. Under the Compact, the Upper Basin states agreed to deliver to the Lower Basin states 75 million acre-feet of water over a 10-year period. Lake Mead is the delivery reservoir for the three Lower Basin states. Lake Powell is the storage system that permits the Upper Basin states to meet their water delivery obligations to the Lower Basin states. The Upper Basin states store water in Lake Powell for periods of drought to ensure there is an available water supply to meet the terms of the Compact. If the Upper Basin

states do not meet that obligation, they are required to cut off their users until they have delivered 75 million acre-feet over the 10-year period to the Lower Basin states.

In 1944, the United States and Mexico established The Mexican Water Treaty (Treaty). In that Treaty, the United States guaranteed to Mexico that it was entitled to 1.5 million acre-feet of water from the Colorado River system. With the Upper and Lower Basin states each receiving 7.5 million acre-feet of water and the 1.5 million acre-feet granted to Mexico, the Colorado River system is stressed. It is over-appropriated and this has become an increasing concern to all members of the seven basin states.

Of all basin states, Nevada receives the lowest amount of water—300,000 acre-feet annually. At the time the Compact was signed, low population levels and lack of agriculture in Nevada were determiners of the division of water among the states. Southern Nevada relies heavily on the water from the Colorado River. Ninety percent of southern Nevada's water supply comes from that river. Nevada has been able to extend its allotment by the use of return-flow credits. Southern Nevada recycles 100 percent of its wastewater. Everything that comes into the sewer system is treated and reused. For every gallon of treated wastewater returned to Lake Mead, SNWA receives a return-flow credit of an additional gallon of water over allocation.

I would like to direct your attention to page 9 of the presentation, [Exhibit C](#). Water conservation is a large part of our water resource plan. As you can see, there is a dotted line at the top of the chart and a solid red line below it. The dotted line represents our water usage in the absence of conservation. The red line assumes that Nevada will achieve the conservation goals set by the Agency. Below the red line is a mosaic of various water supply sources available to SNWA. Some of these sources are temporary. Temporary water resources include the Arizona Water Bank, a virtual water bank with California, groundwater basin storage and the Brock Reservoir. The SNWA pays Arizona to store 1.2 million acre-feet of Colorado River water for southern Nevada's future use. As of 2007, SNWA established a virtual water bank with California. Any water that southern Nevada conserves, leases or acquires on the Muddy and Virgin Rivers is pumped to California. Nevada can take that water back when it is needed. Since 1985, SNWA has been banking water in its own groundwater basin. It has approximately 380,000 acre-feet of water stored in that basin. The Brock Reservoir is a storage reservoir on the All-American Canal. California,

Arizona and Nevada jointly funded the construction of the reservoir. The water stored in this reservoir prevents over-delivery of water to Mexico. In exchange for making the initial investment, SNWA is entitled to 400,000 acre-feet of water, which is stored in Lake Mead. Permanent resources include purchased agricultural water rights on the Muddy and Virgin Rivers, the possibility of future desalination plants and augmentation. In 2007, the basin states embarked on a basin-wide study for augmentation of the entire Colorado River system. As a result of that study, it was agreed that the first 75,000 acre-feet of new water coming into the system would be allocated to Nevada.

Nevada has been in a drought situation for the last ten years. If you average the run-off of the Colorado River over that ten-year period, you will find that it is 69 percent of normal. If that average runoff continues, it is expected that Lake Mead's water elevation will fall to 1,050 feet by 2013. At that level, the upper intake valve will fail. If drought conditions continue through 2015, the second intake valve will fail. The SNWA is currently constructing a third intake valve to alleviate this situation. We anticipate the project will be completed by 2013. If Lake Mead falls below 1,025 feet, approximately 3 million-5 million acre-feet of water use will need to be cut from the Lower Basin states usage. To put that into perspective, Hoover Dam stops generating electricity at 1,050 feet. We will need to rely heavily on our water banks as long as they are available to us.

Since southern Nevada recycles virtually all of its wastewater, conservation is the only way to cut down on water use. The effect of our conservation plan has been phenomenal. We lead the nation in conservation efforts in an urban environment. We have reduced the amount of water we deliver to southern Nevadans from 325,000 acre-feet in 2002 to 245,000 acre-feet in 2010, despite a population increase of 400,000.

We need a water supply that is completely detached from the Colorado River system. We have proposed projects of groundwater production wells, pipelines, pump stations, and regulating tanks that extend from the Highway 15 corridor into southern Nevada and up into White Pine County. The State Engineer, Division of Water Resources, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (State Engineer), awarded SNWA 78,755 acre-feet of water in Spring, Delamar, Dry Lake and Cave Valleys. However, in *Great Basin Water Network v. Nevada State Engineer*, 126 Nev., Advance Opinion 2 (2010), the Nevada Supreme Court found the State Engineer committed a procedural error.

A new hearing has been scheduled for later in the year to decide those water rights. In 2006 and 2007, SNWA began to acquire ranch properties in Spring Valley. In doing so, SNWA acquired 34,000 acre-feet of surface water rights, 7,000 acre-feet of groundwater rights and 23,000 acre-feet of supplemental water rights. The water rights were not purchased with the intention of pumping the water away from Spring Valley. These water rights are critically important in the management of the groundwater basin. We entered into a stringent monitoring and mitigation plan with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. National Park Service and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs for joint management of those basins. The groundwater will be carefully managed, and the monitoring plan will be reviewed annually with those agencies to determine how much water will be available for export to southern Nevada.

Page 28 of the PowerPoint presentation, [Exhibit C](#), outlines SNWA's funding sources. In 1998, voters approved a 0.25 cent sales tax for capital improvement water projects. Clark County was the only county in the State that received a cap on the amount of money collected and a restriction of time under which it could collect. For every other county in the State, it was an unlimited revenue supply. Our ability to collect the sales tax expires in 2025, or when we have collected \$2.3 billion from that revenue source. When financial institutions look at our models, there is a significant drop-off of revenue in 2025. This is challenging SNWA in our bond rating and in our overall ability to sell bonds. The SNWA will approach the Legislature this year for a bill draft request asking that the sales tax be continued.

SENATOR RHOADS:

What was the lowest level Lake Mead reached, and what was the highest level?

MS. MULROY:

The lowest was 1,083 feet, the highest was 1,220 feet.

CHAIR MANENDO:

We now have presentations by the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), the Western Regional Water Commission (WRWC) and the Washoe County Department of Water Resources (WCDWR).

MIKE CARRIGAN (Councilman, City of Sparks; Chair, Truckee Meadows Water Authority; Chair, Western Regional Water Commission):

The TMWA was founded in 2001. Sierra Pacific Power Company sold its water department to Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. Washoe County General Fund money was not used for this purchase. It was important to the cities and the county that they retain local control of their water resources. The revenue source for TMWA is the sale of water and hydroelectricity and developer fees. The TMWA's board members include two members from Sparks, three members from Reno and two members from Washoe County. All but one of the board members is an elected official.

MARK FOREE, P.E. (General Manager, Truckee Meadows Water Authority):

We have prepared a PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit D](#)) outlining the history, background and operations of TMWA which owns more than 90,000 acre-feet of surface water rights on the Truckee River system. Approximately 90 percent of our water supply comes from Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River system. We have 22,000 acre-feet of groundwater rights. We have storage rights to upstream reservoirs. We also have a contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for storage of up to 14,000 acre-feet of water in Boca and Stampede Reservoirs. The TMWA has two water-treatment plants and three groundwater-treatment plants. The treatment plants service five wells for tetrachloroethylene (PCE) removal. We have three operating hydroelectric plants on the Truckee River. We receive revenue from those plants through long-term purchase power agreements with NV Energy.

Slide 6 of the PowerPoint presentation, [Exhibit D](#), contains a pie chart detailing all the water that flows down the Truckee River in a one-year period. The TMWA uses approximately 8 percent of the water in the entire river. Of that amount, almost one-half returns to the river system through the wastewater-treatment plant. The bulk of the water flowing down the Truckee River is distributed to the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District.

Slide 7 of the presentation summarizes the snowpack during a 25-year period. Snowpack provides us with a year-round water supply in the Truckee Meadows. The longest drought on record occurred between 1987 and 1994. The last four years have been below average in snowpack. Even though we have had a four-year dry cycle, we have yet to draw on any upstream drought reserves. We are off to a good start this year. The Truckee River Basin snowpack is 122 percent of average, and the Lake Tahoe Basin is 139 percent of average.

Lake Tahoe is approximately 30 percent full and we think it will be 70 percent full by the end of the runoff season.

Our total water usage has dropped significantly over the last ten years. In fact, our usage dropped by 17 percent at a time when our population increased by 20 percent-25 percent. The decline in usage is a result of conservation and the installation of water meters. When TMWA was formed in 2001, it was a partially-metered system. Since then, we have installed meters and are now a 98 percent-metered system. Customers now pay the metered rate which leads to conservation. Vacant residences and businesses in our area also cause a lower water usage.

The TMWA has a detailed water resource planning process. We recently completed our 20-year water resource plan. That plan outlines the projected demands along with current and future water resources. Our research indicates that we have sufficient water resources to meet the projected demands through year 2030 and beyond. The Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) is a negotiated settlement agreement between Nevada, California, the United States, TMWA and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. This agreement has doubled our drought storage supply and ratified the allocation of water between Nevada and California. It benefits endangered species and recreation. Also, through TROA, water saved through conservation adds to water storage.

As you can see from slide 11, revenue is down from 2007. However, we have reduced our operating expenses by eliminating some of our workforce, conserving energy, negotiating with vendors and instituting a wage freeze. We are currently spending at the 2007 level. We plan to reduce staffing by an additional 8 percent to 12 percent in the coming year.

Our hydroelectric plants produce 80 percent of the energy we need to run our water systems. That energy usage may be significantly decreased with other initiatives we are working on.

In S.B. No. 487 of the 74th Session, the Legislature required water utilities to evaluate consolidation. In 2009, TMWA and the Washoe County Department of Water Resources (WCDWR) evaluated and identified the benefits to a merger, including improved water resource management, better utilization of existing infrastructure, reduced maintenance costs and improvement of customer service. Due to the current economic situation, it is not feasible at this time to

refinance WCDWR's debt—a requirement of the merger agreement. We will move forward with all other aspects of the agreement and wait for improved market conditions to complete the merger.

ROSEMARY MENARD (Director, Department of Water Resources, Washoe County): I have two presentations for you today. The first presentation is on the activities of WCDWR. I have prepared a handout ([Exhibit E](#)) of that presentation. The second presentation is an update on the activities of the Western Regional Water Commission (WRWC) and the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (NNWPC). I have a handout of that presentation ([Exhibit F](#)) as well.

The WCDWR is a water, wastewater, reclaimed-water utility, providing service to 56,800 customers. The WCDWR has 18 water systems, 3 wastewater treatment plants, 15 collection systems and 1 reclaimed water facility for non-potable irrigation water. Our wastewater plant is a zero-discharge plant. Every drop of water produced by that plant is stored in the treated effluent reservoir and used as reclaimed water for the south Truckee Meadows area. The DWR programs include daily operation and maintenance, capital improvement planning, project implementation, water resource planning and management of potential groundwater development areas. We provide administrative management and oversight for the Central Truckee Meadows Remediation District (CTMRD), WRWC and NNWPC.

Our key initiatives for 2011 include: the continuing effort to consolidate our water utility functions with TMWA, to minimize pumping costs, to plan capital improvements and to be actively involved in regional water management and planning activities

Our budget for fiscal year (FY) 2011 consists of \$30.3 million for operating expenses, \$14.4 million for the capital improvement program, \$7.8 million for the Central Truckee Meadows District and \$6.1 million in debt service. We have 78 employees. We are authorized to have a total of 95 positions for FY 2011. In 2009, we implemented a five-year schedule of rate increases. We are in the third year of those annual rate increases.

Slide 9 of the presentation, [Exhibit E](#), outlines a six-year history of our operating revenues, expenses and capital budget. Slide 10 contains a graph outlining our capital improvement program expenditures. The Sewer Grant shown on the graph was intended to be used for the next increment of the Spanish Springs

conversion from septic systems to sewer service. That grant money is no longer available. Two thousand properties on one-third acre lots in Spanish Springs rely on septic systems. The concentration and density of the septic systems are resulting in contamination of the groundwater. We are not able to pursue the conversion project due to the loss of the grant money. A special assessment could be charged to the property owners. However, that assessment would total \$30,000 per property, and property owners cannot afford that high assessment. We continue to look for opportunities to solve this problem.

Slide 12 of the presentation is a brief overview of CTMRD. The WCDWR provides water treatment processes funded by CTMRD. In addition to treating well sites, we are attempting to locate the source of PCE-affected wells.

My next presentation, [Exhibit F](#), is for WRWC and NNWPC. Senate Bill No. 487 of the 74th Session created a new regional water entity known as WRWC. Over the past two years, WRWC has accomplished updating its regional water management plan. Progress was also made on the consolidation analysis with TMWA. The WRWC played an active role in the development of Washoe County Ballot Question No. 3 for the November 2008, General Election. That ballot question asked voters if the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan should be amended to reflect and include a policy requiring that local government land-use plans be based on, and in balance with, identified and sustainable water resources available within Washoe County. That ballot question passed, and WRWC has been working on implementing the project. Slides 8 through 10 of the presentation document progress of the project.

The Legislative Committee to Oversee the WRWC has recommended the drafting of two bill draft requests (BDRs) for this current Legislative Session. One of the BDRs would allow for the refinancing of debt through the county bond bank as well as the financing of new debt. The other BDR would authorize the issuance of bonds to finance loans to provide financial assistance to persons to connect to public water or sewer systems.

CHAIR MANENDO:

We will now hear the presentation of the Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD)

EDWIN JAMES (General Manager, Carson Water Subconservancy District):

I have provided you with a handout ([Exhibit G](#)) that contains an overview of CWSD. The CWSD was established in 1959 for the purpose of negotiating the purchase of land for the building of a dam on the upper Carson River. In 1989, the State changed the role of CWSD to water resource planning and regional watershed planning. In 1998, the Carson River Conference was held. The outcome of that conference was to integrate a watershed process which would include flood, habitat and water supply issues. The CWSD was asked to take the lead on this project. The members of CWSD are Douglas, Lyon, Churchill, Alpine and Storey Counties and Carson City. The role of CWSD is the responsible management and development of water resources in the upper Carson River to alleviate reductions and loss of water supply, promote conservation and protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of the upper Carson River Basin. The CWSD board is composed of 14 members, most of whom are elected officials. Our funding comes from property taxes and grants.

It is critical to understand that water demands need to be balanced. We have agricultural, environmental and domestic needs. The CWSD is not a water purveyor, an agricultural district or an environmental group, but we understand the needs of all these groups.

The Carson River is fully appropriated—even flood waters are allocated. There is no new water available from the river. The groundwater basins are over-appropriated. The CWSD has limited water storage capabilities. Our water supply has water-quality issues such as arsenic, nitrates, phosphorus and algae. A recent concern is the runoff pattern changes due to climate change. We are currently conducting a study with Desert Research Institute to review those runoff patterns. We are noticing that the river is running off sooner, greater flows are occurring in March, and we are having dryer summers. This has a huge impact on the community, the environment and agriculture. Our watershed challenges include limited water supplies, loss of floodplain, noxious weeds, wildlife habitat, water-quality problems and damage from flooding.

The goal of CWSD is to reduce duplication of effort and to work cooperatively with various federal and state agencies. The projects of CWSD include the "Carson River Watershed Regional Floodplain Management Plan" and the "Carson River Watershed Adaptive Stewardship Plan." Current programs are the development of the "Regional Water Conservation Program," community

outreach and education, river restoration projects, noxious-weed control, water-quality studies and updating floodplain maps. We are building a pipeline from Minden to Carson City. An existing pipeline ties Carson City and Lyon County together. Water is moved back and forth depending on need and supply. We have habitat enhancement programs and recreation plans. We are ready to start promoting recreational opportunities on the Carson River.

CHAIR MANENDO:

We will open the hearing on Senate Joint Resolution (S.J.R.) 5.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 5: Expresses opposition to certain proposed actions concerning wild horse and burro herds on federal public lands in Nevada and urges Congress to take certain actions concerning those herds. (BDR R-215)

SENATOR DEAN A. RHOADS (Rural Nevada Senatorial District; Chair, Legislative Committee on Public Lands):

As Chair of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands (LCPL), I would like to introduce S.J.R. 5. Two issues dominate every interim period—grazing and wild horses. At every meeting of LCPL, we hear testimony relating to protection of the health of Nevada rangelands. Healthy rangelands minimize the spread of wildfires and invasive weeds and contribute to the health of wild horses, cattle and sheep. Healthy rangelands provide the habitat needed to support hunting and the habitat for endangered species. Nevada is home to over 17,000 wild horses. The management of wild horses is a critical issue. The Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has 102 Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in Nevada. Within each area, BLM has determined the maximum population levels of horses it can support. The LCPL heard testimony from ranchers and residents who are concerned about the impact of too many wild horses in the HMAs. Wild horse advocates also testified in front of LCPL. The BLM also discussed with LCPL the difficulties of managing wild horses and the limited options for reducing herd populations. Fertility control, selective removal of mares and adoption programs are only partial solutions. The LCPL recognizes and supports the preservation of wild horses on Nevada's rangelands. The concerns of possible population increases in HMAs is addressed in S.J.R. 5. Any increase in population would come at the expense of ranching and recreation on public lands. The LCPL is also concerned with BLM's difficulties in controlling the population levels and fulfilling its management obligations under federal law. I urge your support of S.J.R. 5.

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MEGHAN BROWN (Executive Director, Nevada Cattlemen's Association):

I have written testimony ([Exhibit H](#)) as well as a PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit I](#)) to share with the Committee. The basic message contained in the exhibits establishes that by reducing the number of horses removed, the BLM is disregarding the terms of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (Act). It is essential that the wild horse population is kept at or below the high end of appropriate management levels (AML) to avoid any impact on agriculture, hunting, endangered species, threatened species and recreation. The Nevada Cattlemen's Association urges you to support S.J.R. 5.

JOSEPH GUILD (Vice Chair, Federal Lands Committee, National Cattlemen's Beef Association):

We are in support of this resolution.

DOUG BUSSELMAN (Executive Vice President, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation):

I would like to read from my written testimony ([Exhibit J](#)). The Nevada Farm Bureau strongly supports passage of S.J.R. 5 and the four objectives that are outlined in the resolution. Those objectives are to express opposition to the proposed expansion of HMAs and the creation of preserves on public lands, to express opposition to amendments to the Act, to encourage Congress to comply with the existing laws and regulations and to urge BLM to manage the rangelands in a manner ensuring the health of the rangelands and their availability for multiple use.

KYLE DAVIS (Political Director, Nevada Conservation League)

Our organization is in support of the resolution. The arguments have already been outlined showing the environmental damage caused by overpopulation of wild horse herds. The director of BLM is from Nevada and has experience with this issue. He is doing the best he can to follow federal law and to protect the rangelands of Nevada. We need to tell him the people of Nevada support the protection of our rangelands and this resolution.

DARYL CAPURRO (Chair, Legislative Committee, Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of Wildlife):

On behalf of the committee, we are in favor of S.J.R. 5. The resolution urges Congress to maintain the AMLs for wild horses and burros in Nevada. It also addresses the issue of wild horse and burro sanctuary areas. The Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of Wildlife, sent correspondence ([Exhibit K](#)) to Ken Salazar, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, opposing the

establishment of sanctuary areas, citing a lack of information as to how they would impact the wildlife situation in Nevada. The Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge has not had cattle grazing on that land for approximately 20 years. That refuge has suffered severe damage to the riparian and grazing areas by the existing wild horse population.

KEN MAYER (Acting Director, Department of Wildlife):

I also have prepared testimony ([Exhibit L](#)) to read to you. The Department of Wildlife is in support of S.J.R. 5. We support the management of rangelands to achieve a thriving ecological balance. There are too many horses on the rangelands with insufficient feed and water to support them. This overgrazing has led to the destruction of sagebrush habitat—the most imperiled ecosystem in the United States. It is our hope that Congress and BLM take appropriate action to ensure there is an ecological balance between horses, wildlife and livestock.

LARRY JOHNSON (President, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife, Inc.):

I also urge passage of S.J.R. 5. I have a handout ([Exhibit M](#)) published by The Wildlife Society, titled "Feral Horses: Get the Facts." This publication explains the difference between feral and domesticated horses and the impact of feral horses on habitat and wildlife populations. I have also provided you with the front cover and the bibliography of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service "Horse and Burro Management at Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, Environmental Assessment" ([Exhibit N](#)). Extreme habitat damage has occurred to the refuge from overpopulation of wild horse herds. The bibliography includes over one hundred scientific studies documenting the adverse impact of wild horse overpopulation on wildlife. The management techniques BLM proposes will not be effective until there is a reduction of the overall population to appropriate management levels.

H. BONNIE MATTON (President, Wild Horse Preservation League):

I am here in opposition to S.J.R. 5. I have my prepared testimony ([Exhibit O](#)) and would like to read it to you. In reading the resolution, it becomes clear that it has little to do with rangeland health. There are no sound, scientific management principles behind it. A more sensible approach would be to remind Congress of the sensitive nature of our public lands and economy and do so in a way that may gain empathy from federal lawmakers. We need to work toward sustainable solutions and focus on solving the State's problems rather than creating new ones.

CHAIR MANENDO:

I will close the hearing on S.J.R. 5 and continue with any public comments.

J. DEAN BAKER (President, Baker Ranches, Inc.):

I would like to comment on the wild horse and water issues discussed here. If you want to be a successful rancher, you have to keep rangelands in good condition. There are wild horses near our ranch. They have overgrazed all of the quality rangelands. There have been sick horses due to a lack of feed. There must be better management of wild horses, or the rangelands will be completely destroyed.

Our ranch is located in Snake Valley. The water pipeline, which would run through Snake Valley, is clearly critical to SNWA. However, drawdowns of water can alter the land and dry up springs. Pumping underground water will have an impact on agriculture. The eastern part of Nevada is the driest part of the driest state. To think that you can put in a seven-foot pipeline and fill it full of water without an effect on the land is not possible. It is not logical that water should be diverted from agricultural use to water golf courses. I would ask that you look at the impact on the rangelands before approving any pipelines through Snake Valley.

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CHAIR MANENDO:

There being no further business, the meeting of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources is adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Jodene Poley,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Mark A. Manendo, Chair

DATE: _____

<u>EXHIBITS</u>			
Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
	C	Patricia Mulroy	PowerPoint Presentation
	D	Mark Foree	PowerPoint Presentation
	E	Rosemary Menard	PowerPoint Presentation for TMWA
	F	Rosemary Menard	Overview of Washoe County Department of Water Resources
	G	Edwin James	Overview of CWSD
S.J.R. 5	H	Meghan Brown	Prepared Testimony
S.J.R. 5	I	Meghan Brown	PowerPoint Presentation Support to S.J.R.5
S.J.R. 5	J	Doug Busselman	Prepared Testimony
S.J.R. 5	K	Daryl Capurro	Correspondence to U.S. Department of the Interior
S.J.R. 5	L	Ken Mayer	Prepared Testimony
S.J.R. 5	M	Larry Johnson.	Publication, "Feral Horses: Get the Facts"
S.J.R. 5	N	Larry Johnson	Horse and Burro Management at Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, Environmental Assessment
S.J.R. 5	O	H. Bonnie Hatton	Prepared Testimony