

Senate Bill No. 134—Senators Goicoechea,
Gustavson; and Cegavske

Joint Sponsors: Assemblymen Ellison and Grady

CHAPTER.....

AN ACT relating to animals; authorizing a person to apply for a temporary permit to appropriate groundwater to water livestock under certain circumstances; requiring the Department of Wildlife to maintain certain fences; requiring each guzzler to have a notice posted containing certain information; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Under existing law, the water of all sources of water supply in this State belongs to the public and, subject to existing rights, may be appropriated for a beneficial use in accordance with chapter 533 of NRS. (NRS 533.025, 533.030) Existing law also specifically declares that the use of water for watering livestock is a beneficial use and that the right to use water for that purpose may be acquired in the same manner as the right to use water for any other beneficial use. (NRS 533.490) **Section 1** of this bill authorizes a person to apply for a temporary permit to appropriate groundwater to water livestock if the point of diversion is located within a county under a declaration of drought, or within a county that is contiguous to a county under such a declaration, by the Governor, the United States Secretary of Agriculture or the President of the United States.

Sections 2.1-2.5 of this bill exempt an application for such a temporary permit from several requirements in existing law for applications for permits concerning water rights, including publication of notice of the application in a newspaper and authorization for the filing of protests against the granting of the application. This expedited process is similar to the process for the issuance by the State Engineer of temporary permits to appropriate water to establish vegetative cover that is resistant to fire and environmental permits. (NRS 533.436-533.4377)

Existing law creates the Department of Wildlife and requires the Department to administer the wildlife laws of this State. (NRS 501.331) **Section 7** of this bill requires the Department, whenever the Department constructs or causes to be constructed a fence in carrying out its duties, to ensure that the fence is constructed and maintained in such a manner as to prevent livestock from becoming trapped in the fence. **Section 8** of this bill requires each guzzler that is placed to have a notice posted on it which provides the telephone number and any other contact information which may be used to notify the person or agency that placed the guzzler if the guzzler is in disrepair. **Section 8** defines the term "guzzler" as any artificial basin that collects or is designed and constructed to collect precipitation specifically for use by any wildlife.



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

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Chapter 533 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new section to read as follows:

1. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 533.495 and 533.503, a person may apply for a temporary permit to appropriate groundwater to water livestock if the point of diversion is located within a county under a declaration of drought, or within a county contiguous to a county under such a declaration, by the:

- (a) Governor;*
- (b) United States Secretary of Agriculture; or*
- (c) President of the United States.*

2. In addition to the information required by NRS 533.335 and 533.340, an applicant for a temporary permit to appropriate groundwater pursuant to this section shall submit to the State Engineer:

(a) An affidavit stating that, if the temporary permit is for a well, the holder of the temporary permit will plug and seal the well pursuant to chapter 534 of NRS upon the expiration of the temporary permit; and

(b) Any other information required by the State Engineer to determine the necessity of the temporary appropriation.

3. The State Engineer shall approve an application for a temporary permit to appropriate groundwater pursuant to this section if:

- (a) The application is accompanied by the fee prescribed by this chapter;*
- (b) The temporary appropriation is in the public interest; and*
- (c) The temporary appropriation does not impair water rights held by other persons.*

4. A temporary permit to appropriate groundwater issued pursuant to this section must not exceed 1 year in duration.

Sec. 2. (Deleted by amendment.)

Sec. 2.1. NRS 533.360 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.360 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 4, NRS 533.345 and subsection 2 of NRS 533.370, when an application is filed in compliance with this chapter, the State Engineer shall, within 30 days, publish or cause to be published once a week for 4 consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation and printed and published in the county where the water



is sought to be appropriated, a notice of the application which sets forth:

- (a) That the application has been filed.
 - (b) The date of the filing.
 - (c) The name and address of the applicant.
 - (d) The name of the source from which the appropriation is to be made.
 - (e) The location of the place of diversion, described by legal subdivision or metes and bounds and by a physical description of that place of diversion.
 - (f) The purpose for which the water is to be appropriated.
- The publisher shall add thereto the date of the first publication and the date of the last publication.

2. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 4, proof of publication must be filed within 30 days after the final day of publication. The State Engineer shall pay for the publication from the application fee. If the application is cancelled for any reason before publication, the State Engineer shall return to the applicant that portion of the application fee collected for publication.

3. If the application is for a proposed well:

- (a) For municipal, quasi-municipal or industrial use; and
 - (b) Whose reasonably expected rate of diversion is one-half cubic foot per second or more,
- the applicant shall mail a copy of the notice of application to each owner of real property containing a domestic well that is within 2,500 feet of the proposed well, to the owner's address as shown in the latest records of the county assessor. If there are not more than six such wells, notices must be sent to each owner by certified mail, return receipt requested. If there are more than six such wells, at least six notices must be sent to owners by certified mail, return receipt requested. The return receipts from these notices must be filed with the State Engineer before the State Engineer may consider the application.

4. The provisions of this section do not apply to an environmental permit or a temporary permit issued pursuant to NRS 533.436 **H** or *section 1 of this act*.

Sec. 2.2. NRS 533.363 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.363 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, if water for which a permit is requested is to be used in a county other than that county in which it is to be appropriated, or is to be diverted from or used in a different county than that in which it is currently being diverted or used, then the State Engineer shall give notice of the receipt of the request for the permit to:



(a) The board of county commissioners of the county in which the water for which the permit is requested will be appropriated or is currently being diverted or used; and

(b) The board of county commissioners of the county in which the water will be diverted or used.

2. The provisions of subsection 1 do not apply:

(a) To an environmental permit or a temporary permit issued pursuant to NRS 533.436 **H or section 1 of this act.**

(b) If:

(1) The water is to be appropriated and used; or

(2) Both the current and requested place of diversion or use of the water are,

↳ within a single, contiguous parcel of real property.

3. A person who requests a permit to which the provisions of subsection 1 apply shall submit to each appropriate board of county commissioners a copy of the application and any information relevant to the request.

4. Each board of county commissioners which is notified of a request for a permit pursuant to this section shall consider the request at the next regular or special meeting of the board held not earlier than 3 weeks after the notice is received. The board shall provide public notice of the meeting for 3 consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation in its county. The notice must state the time, place and purpose of the meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting the board may recommend a course of action to the State Engineer, but the recommendation is not binding on the State Engineer.

Sec. 2.3. NRS 533.370 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.370 1. Except as otherwise provided in this section and NRS 533.345, 533.371, 533.372 and 533.503, the State Engineer shall approve an application submitted in proper form which contemplates the application of water to beneficial use if:

(a) The application is accompanied by the prescribed fees;

(b) The proposed use or change, if within an irrigation district, does not adversely affect the cost of water for other holders of water rights in the district or lessen the efficiency of the district in its delivery or use of water; and

(c) The applicant provides proof satisfactory to the State Engineer of the applicant's:

(1) Intention in good faith to construct any work necessary to apply the water to the intended beneficial use with reasonable diligence; and



(2) Financial ability and reasonable expectation actually to construct the work and apply the water to the intended beneficial use with reasonable diligence.

2. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 10, where there is no unappropriated water in the proposed source of supply, or where its proposed use or change conflicts with existing rights or with protectable interests in existing domestic wells as set forth in NRS 533.024, or threatens to prove detrimental to the public interest, the State Engineer shall reject the application and refuse to issue the requested permit. If a previous application for a similar use of water within the same basin has been rejected on those grounds, the new application may be denied without publication.

3. In addition to the criteria set forth in subsections 1 and 2, in determining whether an application for an interbasin transfer of groundwater must be rejected pursuant to this section, the State Engineer shall consider:

(a) Whether the applicant has justified the need to import the water from another basin;

(b) If the State Engineer determines that a plan for conservation of water is advisable for the basin into which the water is to be imported, whether the applicant has demonstrated that such a plan has been adopted and is being effectively carried out;

(c) Whether the proposed action is environmentally sound as it relates to the basin from which the water is exported;

(d) Whether the proposed action is an appropriate long-term use which will not unduly limit the future growth and development in the basin from which the water is exported; and

(e) Any other factor the State Engineer determines to be relevant.

4. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and subsections 6 and 10 and NRS 533.365, the State Engineer shall approve or reject each application within 2 years after the final date for filing a protest. The State Engineer may postpone action:

(a) Upon written authorization to do so by the applicant.

(b) If an application is protested.

(c) If the purpose for which the application was made is municipal use.

(d) In areas where studies of water supplies have been determined to be necessary by the State Engineer pursuant to NRS 533.368.

(e) Where court actions or adjudications are pending, which may affect the outcome of the application.



(f) In areas in which adjudication of vested water rights is deemed necessary by the State Engineer.

(g) On an application for a permit to change a vested water right in a basin where vested water rights have not been adjudicated.

(h) Where authorized entry to any land needed to use the water for which the application is submitted is required from a governmental agency.

(i) On an application for which the State Engineer has required additional information pursuant to NRS 533.375.

5. If the State Engineer does not act upon an application in accordance with subsections 4 and 6, the application remains active until approved or rejected by the State Engineer.

6. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and subsection 10, the State Engineer shall approve or reject, within 6 months after the final date for filing a protest, an application filed to change the point of diversion of water already appropriated when the existing and proposed points of diversion are on the same property for which the water has already been appropriated under the existing water right or the proposed point of diversion is on real property that is proven to be owned by the applicant and is contiguous to the place of use of the existing water right. The State Engineer may postpone action on the application pursuant to subsection 4.

7. If the State Engineer has not approved, rejected or held a hearing on an application within 7 years after the final date for filing a protest, the State Engineer shall cause notice of the application to be republished pursuant to NRS 533.360 immediately preceding the time at which the State Engineer is ready to approve or reject the application. The cost of the republication must be paid by the applicant. After such republication, a protest may be filed in accordance with NRS 533.365.

8. If a hearing is held regarding an application, the decision of the State Engineer must be in writing and include findings of fact, conclusions of law and a statement of the underlying facts supporting the findings of fact. The written decision may take the form of a transcription of an oral ruling. The rejection or approval of an application must be endorsed on a copy of the original application, and a record must be made of the endorsement in the records of the State Engineer. The copy of the application so endorsed must be returned to the applicant. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 11, if the application is approved, the applicant may, on receipt thereof, proceed with the construction of the necessary works and take all steps required to apply the water to



beneficial use and to perfect the proposed appropriation. If the application is rejected, the applicant may take no steps toward the prosecution of the proposed work or the diversion and use of the public water while the rejection continues in force.

9. If a person is the successor in interest of an owner of a water right or an owner of real property upon which a domestic well is located and if the former owner of the water right or real property on which a domestic well is located had previously filed a written protest against the granting of an application, the successor in interest must be allowed to pursue that protest in the same manner as if the successor in interest were the former owner whose interest he or she succeeded. If the successor in interest wishes to pursue the protest, the successor in interest must notify the State Engineer in a timely manner on a form provided by the State Engineer.

10. The provisions of subsections 1 to 9, inclusive, do not apply to an application for an environmental permit or a temporary permit issued pursuant to NRS 533.436 ~~or~~ *or section 1 of this act.*

11. The provisions of subsection 8 do not authorize the recipient of an approved application to use any state land administered by the Division of State Lands of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources without the appropriate authorization for that use from the State Land Registrar.

12. As used in this section, "domestic well" has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 534.350.

Sec. 2.4. NRS 533.380 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.380 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 5, in an endorsement of approval upon any application, the State Engineer shall:

(a) Set a time before which the construction of the work must be completed, which must be within 5 years after the date of approval.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, set a time before which the complete application of water to a beneficial use must be made, which must not exceed 10 years after the date of the approval. The time set under this paragraph respecting an application for a permit to apply water to a municipal or quasi-municipal use on any land:

(1) For which a final subdivision map has been recorded pursuant to chapter 278 of NRS;

(2) For which a plan for the development of a project has been approved by the local government pursuant to NRS 278.010 to 278.460, inclusive; or



(3) On any land for which a plan for the development of a planned unit development has been recorded pursuant to chapter 278A of NRS,

↳ must not be less than 5 years.

2. The State Engineer may limit the applicant to a smaller quantity of water, to a shorter time for the completion of work, and, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b) of subsection 1, to a shorter time for the perfecting of the application than named in the application.

3. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 4 and NRS 533.395 and 533.4377, the State Engineer may, for good cause shown, grant any number of extensions of time within which construction work must be completed, or water must be applied to a beneficial use under any permit therefor issued by the State Engineer, but a single extension of time for a municipal or quasi-municipal use for a public water system, as defined in NRS 445A.235, must not exceed 5 years, and any other single extension of time must not exceed 1 year. An application for the extension must in all cases be:

(a) Made within 30 days following notice by registered or certified mail that proof of the work is due as provided for in NRS 533.390 and 533.410; and

(b) Accompanied by proof and evidence of the reasonable diligence with which the applicant is pursuing the perfection of the application.

↳ The State Engineer shall not grant an extension of time unless the State Engineer determines from the proof and evidence so submitted that the applicant is proceeding in good faith and with reasonable diligence to perfect the application. The failure to provide the proof and evidence required pursuant to this subsection is prima facie evidence that the holder is not proceeding in good faith and with reasonable diligence to perfect the application.

4. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 5 and NRS 533.395, whenever the holder of a permit issued for any municipal or quasi-municipal use of water on any land referred to in paragraph (b) of subsection 1, or for any use which may be served by a county, city, town, public water district or public water company, requests an extension of time to apply the water to a beneficial use, the State Engineer shall, in determining whether to grant or deny the extension, consider, among other factors:

(a) Whether the holder has shown good cause for not having made a complete application of the water to a beneficial use;



(b) The number of parcels and commercial or residential units which are contained in or planned for the land being developed or the area being served by the county, city, town, public water district or public water company;

(c) Any economic conditions which affect the ability of the holder to make a complete application of the water to a beneficial use;

(d) Any delays in the development of the land or the area being served by the county, city, town, public water district or public water company which were caused by unanticipated natural conditions; and

(e) The period contemplated in the:

(1) Plan for the development of a project approved by the local government pursuant to NRS 278.010 to 278.460, inclusive; or

(2) Plan for the development of a planned unit development recorded pursuant to chapter 278A of NRS,

↳ if any, for completing the development of the land.

5. The provisions of subsections 1 and 4 do not apply to an environmental permit or a temporary permit issued pursuant to NRS 533.436 ~~H~~ *or section 1 of this act.*

6. For the purposes of this section, the measure of reasonable diligence is the steady application of effort to perfect the application in a reasonably expedient and efficient manner under all the facts and circumstances. When a project or integrated system is composed of several features, work on one feature of the project or system may be considered in finding that reasonable diligence has been shown in the development of water rights for all features of the entire project or system.

Sec. 2.5. NRS 533.400 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.400 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, on or before the date set in the endorsement of a permit for the application of water to beneficial use, or on the date set by the State Engineer under a proper application for extension therefor, any person holding a permit from the State Engineer to appropriate the public waters of the State of Nevada, to change the place of diversion or the manner or place of use, shall file with the State Engineer a statement under oath, on a form prescribed by the State Engineer. The statement must include:

(a) The name and post office address of the person making the proof.

(b) The number and date of the permit for which proof is made.

(c) The source of the water supply.



(d) The name of the canal or other works by which the water is conducted to the place of use.

(e) The name of the original person to whom the permit was issued.

(f) The purpose for which the water is used.

(g) If for irrigation, the actual number of acres of land upon which the water granted in the permit has been beneficially used, giving the same by 40-acre legal subdivisions when possible.

(h) An actual measurement taken by a licensed state water right surveyor or an official or employee of the Office of the State Engineer of the water diverted for beneficial use.

(i) The capacity of the works of diversion.

(j) If for power, the dimensions and capacity of the flume, pipe, ditch or other conduit.

(k) The average grade and difference in elevation between the termini of any conduit.

(l) The number of months, naming them, in which water has been beneficially used.

(m) The amount of water beneficially used, taken from actual measurements, together with such other data as the State Engineer may require to become acquainted with the amount of the appropriation for which the proof is filed.

2. The provisions of subsection 1 do not apply to a person holding an environmental permit or a temporary permit issued pursuant to NRS 533.436 ~~†~~ *or section 1 of this act.*

Sec. 3. (Deleted by amendment.)

Sec. 4. (Deleted by amendment.)

Sec. 4.5. NRS 533.485 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.485 As used in NRS 533.485 to 533.510, inclusive ~~†~~ , *and section 1 of this act:*

1. "Public range" means all lands belonging to the United States and to the State of Nevada on which livestock are permitted to graze, including lands set apart as national forests and lands reserved for other purposes.

2. "Range livestock" ~~{shall-mean}~~ *means* livestock which during the general period or season when they are being or are proposed to be watered at the place involved ~~{shall-be}~~ *are* subsisting chiefly or entirely by grazing on the public range.

Sec. 5. (Deleted by amendment.)

Sec. 5.5. NRS 533.510 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.510 NRS 533.485 to 533.510, inclusive, *and section 1 of this act* do not affect the validity of rights to the use of water for watering livestock or other purposes acquired under the previously



existing laws of this state or by decree or impair any existing vested or decreed right to the use of water for that purpose.

Sec. 6. Chapter 501 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto the provisions set forth as sections 7 and 8 of this act.

Sec. 7. *If the Department constructs or causes to be constructed a fence in carrying out its duties, the Department shall, to the greatest extent practicable, ensure that the fence is constructed and maintained in such a manner as to prevent livestock from being trapped in the fence.*

Sec. 8. 1. *Each guzzler must have posted on it a notice providing the telephone number and any other contact information which may be used to notify the person or agency that placed the guzzler if the guzzler is in disrepair.*

2. *As used in this section, "guzzler" means any artificial basin that collects or is designed and constructed to collect precipitation specifically for use by any wildlife.*

Sec. 9. For each guzzler specified in section 8 of this act which is placed before October 1, 2013, and which remains in use on that date, the person or agency that placed the guzzler shall comply with the provisions of section 8 of this act on or before October 1, 2014.

