

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 3—Committee on
Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging Congress to facilitate the payment of contractors who completed hazardous fuels treatment projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin pursuant to contracts with the Nevada Fire Safe Council.

WHEREAS, In 1999, Northern Nevada experienced one of the worst wildfire years on record, with more than 1.6 million acres burned and significant economic and environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, In the spring of 1999, a resolution was approved at Nevada's first comprehensive fire conference, known as the "Living With Fire Forum," which urged the establishment of a statewide council to provide support to make homes, neighborhoods and communities in Nevada safe from fire; and

WHEREAS, The Nevada Fire Safe Council was formed as a domestic nonprofit corporation on December 10, 1999, and received appropriations from the Nevada Legislature in 2005 and 2007 to administer a community-based wildfire threat reduction program; and

WHEREAS, By March 2007, the Council had grown to include 60 affiliated chapters and 3,515 members; and

WHEREAS, The Angora Fire in the summer of 2007 burned more than 250 structures on private property and more than 3,000 acres in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and further amplified the existing need for mitigation work to reduce the threat of wildfire in communities; and

WHEREAS, Between 2008 and 2012, the Council was awarded over \$21 million in federal reimbursement grants to be used to pay public and private entities for the completion of hazardous fuels treatment projects; and

WHEREAS, In July 2011, the Office of Inspector General of the United States Department of Agriculture initiated an audit of the Council's records after receiving a complaint on its hotline alleging that the Council was awarding certain contracts in a noncompetitive manner; and

WHEREAS, The audit report issued by the Inspector General in January 2012 indicated various accounting irregularities in the Council's administration of the federal reimbursement grant money and resulted in the freezing of reimbursement payments of that grant money for completed projects until the accounting deficiencies were corrected; and



WHEREAS, In November 2012, the Council filed for bankruptcy and ceased operations; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the freezing of reimbursement payments and the Council's bankruptcy, various public and private entities that had completed hazardous fuels treatment projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin pursuant to agreements with the Council have not been paid for their services, which has caused significant economic hardship to those entities; and

WHEREAS, On March 20, 2014, California Assemblyman Brian Dahle and his staff were joined by staff from the offices of United States Representatives Doug LaMalfa and Tom McClintock to share their concerns about the outstanding debts of the Council and to explore solutions with Nevada's Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System; and now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the 78th Session of the Nevada Legislature hereby urge Congress to facilitate the payment of contractors who completed hazardous fuels treatment projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin pursuant to contracts with the Nevada Fire Safe Council; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Attorney General of the United States, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the United States 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.

