ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4–ASSEMBLYWOMAN SWANK

PREFILED FEBRUARY 13, 2017

JOINT SPONSOR: SENATOR SEGERBLOM

Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining

SUMMARY—Requests the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to conduct an independent scientific and economic analysis of the current management practices of the Colorado River, the impact of these practices on water security, flood protection and biodiversity recovery, and alternative management options, including draining Lake Powell and decommissioning and destroying the Glen Canyon Dam. (BDR R-101)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: No.

~

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

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION—Requesting the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to conduct an independent scientific and economic analysis of the current management practices of the Colorado River, the impact of these practices on water security, flood protection and biodiversity recovery, and alternative management options, including draining Lake Powell and decommissioning and destroying the Glen Canyon Dam.

WHEREAS, The Colorado River provides water to 7 states, 20 Indian tribes and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, The supply of water in the Colorado River is critical to the economies, people and natural resources of these jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, Numerous issues, including climate change and overconsumption, threaten the Colorado River and its surrounding habitats; and

WHEREAS, Numerous independent scientists have warned that the current management practices of the Colorado River may be placing those who depend on the Colorado River at risk; and

WHEREAS, The water management infrastructure of the Colorado River is outdated and based on an invalid assumption which causes unintended impacts and risks; and

WHEREAS, The Glen Canyon Dam poses a safety risk to the residents of this State, loses billions of gallons of water stored in Lake Powell each year due to evaporation and leakages from the reservoir, disrupts natural sediment transport, degrades the natural biological diversity and physical landscapes of unique elements of the world's natural heritage and impacts the cultural heritage and religious practices of indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, There is presently no independent body examining the complex set of interrelated issues affecting the health and sustainability of the Colorado River system; and

WHEREAS, As the nation's premier source of independent, multidisciplinary, expert advice on issues including science, engineering and the environment, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences is uniquely qualified to conduct an independent review and analysis of the current management practices of the Colorado River, the impact of these practices on water security, flood protection and biodiversity recovery, and alternative management strategies to overcome any impacts, including altering and augmenting infrastructure, specifically draining Lake Powell and decommissioning and destroying the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the 79th Session of the Nevada Legislature hereby urge the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to undertake a study of the current management practices of the Colorado River, the impact of these practices on water security, flood protection and biodiversity recovery, and alternative management strategies to overcome any impacts, including altering and augmenting infrastructure, specifically draining Lake Powell and decommissioning and destroying the Glen Canyon Dam; and be it further

RESOLVED, That such a study should consider, without limitation:

1. The sufficiency and sustainability of the flow of the Colorado River to satisfy the allocations of water prescribed by the Colorado River Compact;

2. The sufficiency and sustainability of groundwater supplies to meet projected demand;

3. Flood risks and strategies for flood management;

4. The viability of expanded aquifer recharge as an alternative to the storage of Colorado River water above ground;

5. The protection and rehabilitation of animal and plant species;

6. Instream flow requirements to recover natural habitat conditions in the Colorado River delta and the remediation of the Salton Sea agricultural drainage;

7. Scenarios for the allocation of Colorado River water and the appropriate infrastructure to realize the scenarios in order to meet the region's future fresh water needs in times of flood or drought and sustain and enhance the River corridor's natural biodiversity;

8. Options for draining Lake Powell and decommissioning and destroying the Glen Canyon Dam that:

(a) Mitigate flood risks on the Colorado River below Grand Canyon National Park when the Glen Canyon Dam is no longer available for flood storage and routing purposes;

(b) Provide interim bypass mechanisms for water and sediment around, below and through the Glen Canyon Dam that are sufficient to allow for the return of the natural flow of the Colorado River at the dam site, up to or exceeding a volume of 200,000 cubic feet per second;

(c) Identify groundwater recharge sites in the Lower Colorado River Basin and the infrastructure requirements to utilize the recharge sites in order to replace the water storage benefits forecasted for Lake Powell;

(d) Identify sources of electricity replacement for the hydropower customers of the Glen Canyon Dam;

(e) Remove sediment from Lake Mead; and

(f) Ensure technical and scientific monitoring and oversight for habitat recovery in Grand Canyon National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area; and

9. Any alternative technologies and techniques that may be used to manage the Colorado River; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Division of Water Resources of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is hereby directed to consult with comparable agencies in the signatory states to the Colorado River Compact, the United States Department of the Interior and the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences regarding options for funding the requested study; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Executive Officer of the

National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, the United States Secretary of the Interior, the Commissioner of the United States Bureau of Reclamation, the Governor of this State and the Governors of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, and the State Engineer as the executive head of the Division of Water Resources of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.

30