

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
AGRICULTURE, AND MINING**

**Seventy-Ninth Session
April 27, 2017**

The Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining was called to order by Acting Chair Maggie Carlton at 1:52 p.m. on Thursday, April 27, 2017, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/79th2017.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Chris Brooks
Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton
Assemblyman John Ellison
Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui
Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner
Assemblywoman Robin L. Titus
Assemblyman Justin Watkins
Assemblyman Jim Wheeler
Assemblyman Steve Yeager

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Chair (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Julia Ratti, Senate District No. 13

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susan E. Scholley, Committee Policy Analyst
Randy Stephenson, Committee Counsel
Nancy Davis, Committee Secretary
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant



OTHERS PRESENT:

Jason King, P.E., State Engineer and Administrator, Office of the State Engineer,
Division of Water Resources, State Department of Conservation and Natural
Resources
C. Joseph Guild III, representing Newmont Mining Corporation
Jeremy Drew, Commissioner, Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of
Wildlife
Kyle Davis, representing Nevada Conservation League
Caron Tayloe, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Willie Molini, Director, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife
Tina Nappe, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Patrick Donnelly, representing Center for Biological Diversity
Karen Boeger, representing Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Erik Jimenez, representing Nevada Bighorns Unlimited
Jennifer Newmark, Administrator, Wildlife Diversity Division, Department of
Wildlife

Acting Chair Carlton:

[Roll was called and standard rules of the Committee were reviewed.] I will open the hearing on Senate Bill 513.

**Senate Bill 513: Increases the limit on the assessment for water distribution expenses.
(BDR 48-905)**

**Jason King, P.E., State Engineer and Administrator, Office of the State Engineer,
Division of Water Resources, State Department of Conservation and Natural
Resources**

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to introduce and provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 513.

The Humboldt Basin, which is managed fiscally through a non-executive budget account, is the only stream system or surface water basin in the state that has an assessment set in statute. The Humboldt River and its tributaries irrigate more than 200,000 acres of land from its headwaters in eastern Elko County downstream to Lovelock in Pershing County, ultimately flowing into the Humboldt Sink. Since 1931, with the enactment of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 533.280, the Office of the State Engineer has been assessing Humboldt River decreed water users for the distribution of the waters of the Humboldt River and its tributaries. The assessments cover salaries, rent, trucks, field equipment, information technology services, and stream gauge maintenance. The assessment has been increased several times since 1931, with the last time being in 2003. Unfortunately, during this 14-year time lag, assessments have not kept up with the expenses associated with administering the decree. This, in part, demonstrates the challenge involved in successfully addressing small incremental fee changes that are in statute.

The assessment in question supports the Division's offices in Elko and Winnemucca, and it is the primary responsibility of these offices to regulate and distribute the waters of the Humboldt River. Our employees are officers of the court and charged with enforcing the order of the court under the Humboldt River Decree. These water commissioners distribute water to more than 660 claimants along the course of the river, which in river miles is over 900 miles in length.

The need to raise this assessment was discussed quite a bit when the bill was in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources. During those discussions, the question was asked whether the agency would raise the assessment immediately to the full cap of \$1. As we stated then, and what we want to reiterate to this Committee, is that the full cap of \$1 per acre-foot that has been requested will not be needed in the immediate future; however, it is important to have room under this assessment cap to make more systematic adjustments as resource needs continue to expand, as I believe the 14-year gap I described above underscores. We have also worked closely with both the affected water authority and the largest user in the Humboldt system and they have both expressed support for this bill.

It is important to note that the Division continues to work with both surface water and groundwater users throughout the entire Humboldt River drainage to come up with a plan and process to conjunctively manage both types of water sources. In order to carry out this plan and process, it is very likely that additional resources may be needed, such as for equipment or computer modeling efforts, to name a couple.

Finally, I would also like to note that, as a comparison, the groundwater basins in the Humboldt system are currently being assessed at 50 cents per acre-foot, while the surface water assessments are presently in statute at 30 cents per acre-foot. [Written testimony was also provided ([Exhibit C](#)).]

Acting Chair Carlton:

I looked up the bill and it passed 20 to 1 out of the Senate, so looks like most folks were pretty comfortable with it.

Assemblywoman Titus:

I want to make sure I have a clear understanding of the process. With the help of this Committee, I brought forward a bill for our local irrigation districts. I know that members of our irrigation district get to vote on who represents them to make those choices. I want to know who represents the people of the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority. Are those members elected by the people who pay this fee? We have shares in our irrigation districts, and we pick our board and they decide on the assessments and costs, et cetera. It is my understanding that the members of the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority are appointed by the county commissioners; I know that it goes through several counties. The choice to raise fees will be determined by you, as our State Engineer, not by the people who are affected by the fees, is that correct?

Jason King:

I do not know how the members of the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority become members.

Assemblyman Wheeler:

When we raise the cap on the fee from 30 cents to one dollar per acre-foot, what do you see as an immediate rise in fees?

Jason King:

We do not see it going up to \$1. As I testified on the Senate side, I do believe that we will raise the assessment from 30 cents to 50 cents, should this pass. Beyond 50 cents, I really cannot tell you how long it will be before we bump it up again, but I think it will be several years out. Again, we are doing a lot of work in the drainage. The groundwater users are being assessed 50 cents. We have been very transparent with the decreed water users that we believe we will be raising it to 50 cents. I believe they are in support of it.

Assemblyman Wheeler:

The fee is strictly set by your Division; the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority does not have anything to do with setting that fee, correct?

Jason King:

That is correct. Our office is the one that sets the fee, and it is the Humboldt River decreed water users who are assessed based on their water right amount.

Assemblyman Ellison:

We had a bill last session that wanted to increase fees by lots, acres, or sections; I cannot remember. Most water rights on the Humboldt River go back to 1890-plus. You talked about the heavy users; you are talking about mining and dewatering, is that right?

Jason King:

What we are talking about here are the assessments to the Humboldt River decreed water right holders, for which there are approximately 690,000 acre-feet of decreed water rights. Those that use the surface water—in fact Newmont Mining Corporation is the largest decreed water right holder on the system—will be paying for it. When you get farther away from the main stem and you are talking about dewatering, that is groundwater pumping. In those instances, they are currently paying 50 cents per acre-foot for the groundwater assessment. A short answer to your question, it is the surface water users on the Humboldt River, the major farmers and Newmont Mining Corporation, who pay these fees.

Assemblyman Ellison:

Has anyone talked to the users?

Jason King:

Humboldt River Basin Water Authority, who submitted their letter of support, has talked with their constituency ([Exhibit D](#)). Our office has been up and down the Humboldt River for probably three to four years talking about all the work we are doing, and discussion of assessments has always been a part of those public workshops.

C. Joseph Guild III, representing Newmont Mining Corporation:

Newmont Mining Corporation is the parent company of Elko Land and Livestock Company, which the State Engineer referred to. We are the largest single decreed water right holder on the Humboldt River. We have had extensive discussions with the Office of the State Engineer—and in those discussions, we were assured of what the State Engineer said—that there is no intention to immediately raise this up to \$1. We recognize the need for assessments to do some of the State Engineer's work in the Humboldt River Basin. On behalf of my client, Newmont Mining Corporation, we support this increase.

Assemblyman Ellison:

If you can get me the names of some of the people you have talked to along the Humboldt River, I would appreciate it. This is the first time I have heard of this. Also, would you consider a friendly amendment where this could be an increase to the 50 cents you are talking about now, and then in five or six years come back and ask for more?

Jason King:

We need to get to 50 cents an acre-foot soon. We have been operating at a deficit for the last three years. Beyond the 50 cents, I am not sure when we would need to raise it again. My only concern with what you recommended is that it has to be done in a legislative session. Coming back before this body every two years and trying to get a 5-cent or 10-cent increase is problematic. We are just looking for a cap. I understand your concern; you do not want us to go right to the \$1 per acre-feet of water decreed. I am telling you here today that we are not going to. We believe that this provides us some flexibility, over the next ten years, to raise that, if we need to, as additional work is required.

Assemblywoman Titus:

Mr. Guild, I understand that you are okay with this assessment, and I understand that it is being used for studies and maintenance. Are you assessed other fees in that basin? Are there other taxes or fees on that water besides this one?

Joe Guild:

As the State Engineer said, we do have groundwater rights associated with the Elko Land and Livestock Company, and we are assessed those fees. We are currently assessed the 30-cent fee which is in the law right now. We have about 110,000 acre-feet of decreed water on the surface of the Humboldt River that Elko Land and Livestock Company owns.

Assemblywoman Titus:

I had my other question answered. Our Committee policy analyst looked it up and the members of the Humboldt River Basin Water Authority are all appointed by county commissioners.

Acting Chair Carlton:

Mr. King, I understand perfectly where you are coming from as far as setting a cap. I have been in this building long enough to remember that two-thirds was not an issue if you made a good case. Then sometimes folks will say nothing at two-thirds will be considered this session. We have left some folks high and dry who needed resources to get their jobs done. Then we criticize them when they do not get their jobs done because we did not give them the resources.

Is there anyone here in support of S.B. 513? Seeing none, is there anyone in opposition of S.B. 513? No one is coming forward. Is anyone in neutral? Seeing no one, I will close the hearing on S.B. 513 and open the hearing on Senate Joint Resolution 13.

Senate Joint Resolution 13: Expresses the support of the Nevada Legislature for certain recommendations relating to the conservation of wildlife in this State. (BDR R-1000)

Senator Julia Ratti, Senate District No. 13:

As you all know as members of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining, our state has a particularly challenging task—a task that lots of people have lots of input on and lots of ideas about—when it comes to managing our wildlife. We have an opportunity to express our support for a concept at the federal level which expands our ability to manage that wildlife in a more inclusive and productive manner. We have been working diligently at the state level to create a Wildlife Action Plan. That Plan looks at the broad range of species that are present in Nevada, looks at where there may be some challenges, and puts together a plan to address those challenges.

Unfortunately, as I am sure many of the members of this Committee are keenly aware, there are not enough resources to meet the needs of all of the wildlife that we are asked to be stewards for. Senate Joint Resolution 13 expresses our support for a National Blue Ribbon Task Force recommendation that would expand the revenue available to meet some of those needs. With that, I would like to turn this over to some folks who know a lot more about this issue than I do. I am here to endorse and present the bill with my full support, but I will let these two gentlemen give you the details.

Jeremy Drew, Commissioner, Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of Wildlife:

I would like to start today by thanking Senator Ratti for her support of S.J.R. 13. Our Wildlife Commission was the first in the country to pass a resolution of support of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and

Wildlife Resources. Many other state wildlife commissions have followed suit, and we are hopeful that the Nevada Legislature will also support this effort.

The resolution before you today is similar to the one passed by the Commission, and I would simply like to step through it and highlight some of the key points.

The first whereas statement speaks to Nevada being home to more than 890 species of wildlife. Tony Wasley, Director, Department of Wildlife, has spoken repeatedly to this Committee about their statutory responsibility to manage all of those species. Yet only a small portion of those species actually generate revenue for the Department of Wildlife (NDOW).

The second whereas statement speaks to some existing federal programs, the Pittman-Robertson Act and the Dingell-Johnson Act, that encourage and fund scientific-based management of game and sport fish, financed by hunters, recreational shooters, fishermen, and boaters.

The Pittman-Robertson Act was established in 1937, and of note, Senator Key Pittman was from Nevada, so we have a long tradition in this state for finding conservation funding for wildlife. The Dingell-Johnson Act followed in 1950. Combined, the programs provide about \$1 billion annually, primarily for game and sport fish management nationwide. The system that it works upon is a 3-to-1 federal to state match, based on certified hunters and anglers.

The next whereas statement points out that a similarly dedicated and sustainable method of funding is not available for many other species that are not hunted or fished. In 2001, a program at the federal level was put in place called the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program. It is an annual appropriation, and it varies in amounts. Nevada's average appropriation since the program began is about \$800,000 per year. It does provide critical support for some of our species, but certainly not all. There, again, this is not dedicated funding at the state level. As of now, the projected fiscal year 2018 NDOW budget consists of only about 2 percent of State General Fund.

The next two whereas statements speak to our Wildlife Action Plan and speak specifically to the 256 species that have the greatest need for conservation in the state and the 22 different habitat types that those species are associated with. The Nevada Wildlife Action Plan is our strategic blueprint for achieving comprehensive wildlife conservation statewide. Essentially, the goal is to keep common species common and managed by the state of Nevada, rather than listed on the endangered species list.

With a focus on those 256 species of greatest conservation need, among that list, there are some game animals and fish, such as the mule deer and the Lahontan cutthroat trout, but mostly there are nongame species, ranging from gastropods to amphibians to reptiles and mammals. The plan contains specific goals, objectives, and actions for each of the 22 habitat types, everything from species surveys to specific habitat improvement actions.

Of importance, the new funding recommended by the federal Blue Ribbon Panel would be directed toward implementation of the Nevada Wildlife Action Plan.

The next series of statements speak to the Blue Ribbon Panel. There are a couple of exhibits on Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS) ([Exhibit E](#)) and ([Exhibit F](#)) that speak directly to the Blue Ribbon Panel, its recommendations, and some questions and answers. This is a nationwide effort that recognizes the need for broader funding for wildlife conservation throughout the country. The Blue Ribbon Panel is made up of 26 experts, everything from non-governmental organizations, to industry, to state and federal government. They determined that utilizing an existing source of funding was more appropriate than attempting to implement new funding mechanisms, such as a new tax. The recommendation is basically \$1.3 billion dedicated from existing revenue of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters.

The way the funding allocation would work is similar to the two programs I mentioned earlier. Funds would be allocated through an existing unfunded account through the United States Fish and Wildlife Service known as the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program. This program allows for wildlife management activities, including habitat restoration and enhancement, planning, research, monitoring, land protection, wildlife conservation education, and a wildlife-associated recreation component.

The last whereas statement speaks to states required to provide a matching fund. Again, that is the 3-to-1 ratio. It is estimated that if the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations were to pass Congress, Nevada's annual allocation would be approximately \$20 million per year. At the 3-to-1 ratio, that means Nevada would be on the hook for coming up with approximately \$7 million in matching funds per year. That funding allocation could be a combination of revenue as well as in-kind efforts, such as volunteer time and private donations.

Some examples from other states that helped fund similar programs: Utah has an approximately \$6 million per year general fund allocation that goes toward wildlife conservation programs; Texas has a sales tax dedication that is based on a funding formula for outdoor products, such as hiking boots and binoculars.

The resolved statement basically does three things. First, it expresses support of the findings of the Blue Ribbon Panel and recommends that Congress dedicate \$1.3 billion annually in existing revenue to diversify funding for and management of all wildlife species. Once again, the primary means of that funding would go toward implementing the state Wildlife Action Plan. The second part of the resolution asks that Nevada's congressional delegation support enactment of federal legislation that would implement these recommendations. Finally, the resolution expresses support for broadening dedicated funding methods for conservation of wildlife in Nevada, implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan, and providing state match if, in fact, the federal program is implemented.

Kyle Davis, representing Nevada Conservation League:

I want to thank Senator Ratti for putting a resolution forward that really gets at an issue that we have been trying to figure out for a long time, certainly, the entire time I have been doing this kind of work—that is how to increase the funding available for conservation for a lot of these species. I believe Nevada is the third most wildlife-diverse state in the country. We always find that funding for conservation work for these species is tough to come by. We are always trying to figure out a way to get more resources, especially in Nevada, one of the driest states in the country. We always have a need to be able to enhance these populations. The Department of Wildlife does a great job managing our wildlife and stretching our existing resources to benefit game and nongame species, but this program represents an opportunity to really enhance our efforts and be able to do more good for more species of wildlife that have benefits across the board. We are in support of this resolution and urge its passage.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

This money, \$1.3 billion, is money that our state can certainly use. Is there anything that would be expected in return? What are the terms of what Nevada will be required to do upon acceptance of this \$1.3 billion grant?

Senator Ratti:

Because at this point it is just a recommendation from a Blue Ribbon Task Force at the federal level, there have been no regulations promulgated or any details associated with the plan. What we know is that the recommendation is a 3-to-1 match. I think at this point, we could assume that the obligation would be that match, but beyond that we would be waiting for a regulatory process.

Acting Chair Carlton:

I will now hear those in support of S.J.R. 13.

Caron Tayloe, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am a Wildlife Action Plan advocate. I would like to thank the Committee for hearing S.J.R. 13. I would also like to thank Kyle Davis for putting this together. I especially want to thank Senator Ratti for bringing forward this vision for Nevada's wildlife and for her commitment to tens of thousands of Nevadans who want to conserve wildlife in this great state. Senate Joint Resolution 13 represents a conservation approach by focusing on species in need. We will create healthy ecosystems and therefore more wildlife resources for consumptives and nonconsumptives alike. The Wildlife Action Plan advocates would also like to thank all of the parties that made the Wildlife Action Plan come together. That includes thanking Commissioner Drew and the Board of Wildlife Commissioners for recognizing the need to find additional funding for wildlife. This includes previous commissioners, Tina Nappe and Karen Layne. I would like to thank Director Wasley for his vision on this issue. I would like to thank Chief Game Warden Turnipseed and staff for watching out for Nevada's wildlife. We want to especially recognize Jennifer Newmark, Administrator, Wildlife Diversity Division, Department of Wildlife, and her wonderful staff for all their amazing work on the Wildlife Action Plan.

Wildlife Action Plan advocates are committed to bringing forth attention to the 256 species in 22 habitats at risk in our state and will work to secure funding for their protection.

Willie Molini, Director, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife:

The Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife is strongly supportive of this resolution. I have a strong personal interest in this resolution and its approach since I was director of the Department of Wildlife from 1982 to 1998. During that period, I worked extremely hard to try to get some funding for nongame wildlife. The Department was created in 1948. During its first 40 years, it was primarily funded by hunting and fishing license revenue, sport fish restoration, and Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds. We had our first nongame position in 1970 where we put emphasis on trying to determine the distribution and the status of our raptorial birds. We funded that position with some General Fund money, but very little. We were using some Pittman-Robertson funding. I spent four legislative sessions trying to get some General Fund support for nongame wildlife. We made a breakthrough when the desert tortoise was listed as threatened in Clark County and this legislative body recognized the importance of our having information on species like that. We did get \$1 million in General Fund appropriations for nongame programs.

In 1992, I was president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which is comprised of all of the 50 state wildlife agencies, as well as Canada's provincial wildlife agencies. As part of my agenda that year, I set up a committee and gave them the charge to try to find a method of funding nongame wildlife nationally. I asked them to try to pattern it after the successful Pittman-Robertson program. We moved ahead that way, that initiative became known as Teaming with Wildlife. We were unable to get industry support from the outdoor recreation industry. We were trying to get an excise tax on outdoor equipment other than basic hunting and fishing equipment. Again, we could not get industry support. We never did realize the end goal.

However, we generated enough interest and enough support from the sporting and conservation community that Congress finally came up with wildlife grants. They have provided some wildlife grant money. Now, here comes the Blue Ribbon Panel, which I think is an extraordinary, excellent idea.

It has been 25 years since I appointed the committee in 1992 that we were unsuccessful with. Now, after 25 years, this is a really good way forward. I think this resolution shows that Nevada would support such an approach. Representing the coalition of sportsmen groups, we are strongly supportive of it and urge your support.

Tina Nappe, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

Many thanks to this Committee and also to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources for approving and endorsing this legislation. Thanks also to Senator Ratti who helped propel it forward. I served on the Board of Wildlife Commissioners representing conservation from 1979 to 1994. Since the late 1960s, because of this legislative body, the Nevada Department of Wildlife has had a small but valued program on what we once called nongame but is now called biodiversity species. However, given the growth of our population, the popularity and

use of public lands, as well as changes in private land use and climate changes, we need to know more and invest more in the future of our wildlife species.

Senate Joint Resolution 13, if enacted, will provide more financial resources to invest in our state's wildlife. Even the small program administered by the Nevada Department of Wildlife has proven its value in the past. Information on desert tortoises, Amargosa toads, and the pika have kept these species off the threatened list and enabled us to provide more resources for habitat protection. One of the first beneficiaries of Nevada's program was Nevada's raptors; the hawks and falcons, where nesting sites were inventoried and populations noted, and where falconry regulations were instituted.

I would like to say, as an aside, that one of the things we always have to be careful of is to ensure that we have laws that protect species like falcons so that we do not have out-of-staters coming in just to rob the nests in our state. Another area where the Nevada Department of Wildlife has stepped forward is in reptiles. There is a market for reptiles, and with the states having begun developing programs on reptiles, we do not have the "laundering" of reptiles—taking them from this state and selling them in another state.

This funding source proposed by the National Blue Ribbon Task Force, taxing energy and mineral development on public lands, is a long shot in these trying times, but with Committee support, the Nevada Legislature's endorsement, and the Governor's signature, this would be a major step forward.

Patrick Donnelly, representing Center for Biological Diversity:

I am the Nevada wildlife advocate at the Center for Biological Diversity. We would like to express our support for S.J.R. 13. Nevada is home to one of the most remarkable and diverse arrays of wildlife in the United States. Over 890 species of wildlife call Nevada home, including many dozens that occur only here. Due to a change in climate, inappropriate development, and overconsumption of water resources, many of Nevada's lesser-known species are in dire peril of extinction. The lion's share of funding for NDOW's conservation programs comes from and is focused on just a few high-profile game species, such as deer and elk. While we support the conservation of big game species, all of Nevada's wildlife needs to be conserved.

The Nevada Wildlife Action Plan is a huge step in the right direction for our state. By identifying vulnerable species and habitats and prioritizing conservation efforts, the plan is a blueprint for saving Nevada's special and threatened species. Senate Joint Resolution 13 correctly expresses the sentiment of the people of Nevada: all of our wildlife species are of equal importance and we should be vigorous in our attempts to pursue funding for their conservation. There is also a price for inaction. Many species such as the Amargosa toad or the Big Smoky Valley speckled dace occur in only one or two locations and are extremely vulnerable to extinction. We must remember that extinction is forever. Increased funding for wildlife conservation, particularly for these vulnerable species, can help prevent them from being threatened and therefore avert listings under the federal Endangered Species Act.

In summary, Nevada's Wildlife Action Plan is a perfect blueprint for conserving many of the lesser-known species of wildlife in our state. Senate Joint Resolution 13 correctly demonstrates that wildlife conservation is a priority to the people of Nevada and we encourage you to support it.

[Assemblywoman Cohen assumed the Chair.]

Vice Chair Cohen:

Is there anyone else in support?

Karen Boeger, representing Backcountry Hunters and Anglers:

I want to thank Senator Ratti for bringing this to your attention. Nevada Backcountry Hunters and Anglers greatly support this resolution and hope that you do too. Proposing this created an appropriate means to provide sorely lacking federal funding for nongame species of wildlife. You heard Mr. Molini explain how for many decades we have been trying to achieve something like this. This looks like a very creative way to address it. It is creative because it does not propose a new tax, rather reapportions existing funds from energy and mining extraction on public lands. It is appropriate as those activities can often have negative impacts on wildlife and its habitat despite attempts at mitigation. It is needed because, while we do have federal funds for game species, as was mentioned, we do not have it for nongame. Again, we urge you to please support this resolution unanimously.

Erik Jimenez, representing Nevada Bighorns Unlimited:

I will not belabor the Committee in repeating the comments that have been made, I just want to add that our organization is an emphatic "me, too," and thank Senator Ratti for her work on this resolution.

Vice Chair Cohen:

Is there anyone else in support? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in opposition? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in neutral?

Jennifer Newmark, Administrator, Wildlife Diversity Division, Department of Wildlife:

As you have heard, this resolution supports the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel and the resulting funding that will provide the Department of Wildlife with the opportunity to more fully implement our Wildlife Action Plan. Our Wildlife Action Plan recognizes 256 species of conservation priority and 22 priority habitats. As you have heard, that includes game species, such as mule deer and Lahontan cutthroat trout, but it also includes native fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. Some examples of some of our priority habitats include riparian and spring systems, sagebrush ecosystems, and Mojave mixed desert scrub.

Each species and habitat that is listed in our Wildlife Action Plan has specific objectives and goals. It drives our implementation and actions that the Department takes each year to address those species' needs. Our Wildlife Action Plan is proactive rather than reactive. We look to keep common species common and prevent rare species from declining any

further. Currently, we use annually appropriated and variable state wildlife grants to partially fund the implementation of that plan. We average approximately \$800,000 a year. If the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations pass Congress, we will be appropriated more than \$20 million to implement our Wildlife Action Plan.

Assemblywoman Titus:

I am encouraged that you are looking at a resolution where you look at alternative methods of funding to support this and not using sportsmen's dollars from our tags and our fees. Thank you for not going in that direction. I do appreciate the need for looking at all of the wildlife in Nevada and looking at some alternative funding.

Vice Chair Cohen:

I will now invite the sponsor to give some closing remarks.

Senator Ratti:

Thank you for your time and attention, and I urge your support.

Vice Chair Cohen:

I will bring the S.J.R. 13 hearing to a close, and open up for public comment. Seeing none, we are adjourned [at 2:39 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Nancy Davis
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is written testimony introducing [Senate Bill 513](#), provided by Jason King, P.E., State Engineer and Administrator, Office of the State Engineer, Division of Water Resources, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

[Exhibit D](#) is a letter in support of [Senate Bill 513](#), dated April 26, 2017, provided by Mike Baughman, Executive Director, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority.

[Exhibit E](#) is a report titled "Sustaining and Connecting People to Fish and Wildlife," provided by Jeremy Drew, Commissioner, Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of Wildlife.

[Exhibit F](#) is a report titled "Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, Frequently Asked Questions," provided by Jeremy Drew, Commissioner, Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of Wildlife.