

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 4—
Committee on Natural Resources

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States to protect certain land containing swamp cedars in Spring Valley.

WHEREAS, Spring Valley, located in White Pine County, Nevada, has been a central part of the traditional homelands of certain indigenous Newe peoples, including the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, the Ely Shoshone, the Duckwater Shoshone and certain Paiute peoples, since time immemorial and remains a place of current cultural uses for these peoples; and

WHEREAS, The indigenous Newe peoples continue to use an area in Spring Valley known as Bahsahwahbee, locally known as Swamp Cedars but traditionally known as the Sacred Water Valley, to hold religious and ceremonial gatherings, pass down traditional knowledge, honor their ancestors and mourn for their relatives; and

WHEREAS, A massacre of indigenous people occurred at Bahsahwahbee in the Spring Valley Massacre of 1859 and was committed during a religious and ceremonial gathering; and

WHEREAS, Two subsequent massacres occurred at Bahsahwahbee at times of religious and ceremonial gatherings, the Swamp Cedars Massacre of 1863 and the Swamp Cedars Massacre of 1897; and

WHEREAS, The Rocky Mountain juniper trees, locally known as swamp cedars, that grow on the valley floor in Spring Valley are believed by the Newe peoples to embody the spirits of the indigenous Newe who were killed during those massacres; and

WHEREAS, The Swamp Cedars is a globally and nationally unique grove of Rocky Mountain juniper trees that exists at the valley bottom, unlike Rocky Mountain juniper trees elsewhere in the western United States, which largely grow in the mountains; and

WHEREAS, A large portion of Bahsahwahbee is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property and a much smaller portion lies within the boundaries of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern administered by the Bureau of Land Management; and

WHEREAS, Bahsahwahbee, and the swamp cedar trees therein, faces threats from climate change and development; and

WHEREAS, Neither being listed on the National Register of Historic Places nor being designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern provides legal protections to ensure the



survival of Bahsahwahbee and the indigenous Newe peoples' continued religious and ceremonial use of the site; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Government has a fiduciary relationship with all federally recognized Indian tribes, including tribes of the indigenous Newe peoples; and

WHEREAS, Federal protection of Bahsahwahbee would be strengthened by collaborative management with the sovereign tribal nations that share ancestral and ongoing ties to the site; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That members of the 81st Session of the Nevada Legislature hereby urge the Congress of the United States and the President of the United States to take action to further protect Bahsahwahbee, including, without limitation, designating Bahsahwahbee as a National Monument or expanding Great Basin National Park to include Bahsahwahbee; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the 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.

