

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Eighty-first Session
April 29, 2021**

The Senate Committee on Natural Resources was called to order by Chair Fabian Donate at 3:50 p.m. on Thursday, April 29, 2021, Online and in Room 2144 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Fabian Donate, Chair
Senator Melanie Scheible, Vice Chair
Senator Chris Brooks
Senator Pete Goicoechea

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Ira Hansen (Excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner, Assembly District No. 26
Assemblywoman Robin L. Titus, Assembly District No. 38
Assemblyman Steve Yeager, Assembly District No. 9

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jennifer Ruedy, Policy Analyst
Allan Amburn, Counsel
Christine Miner, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jakob Schein
Jennifer Pedigo, Executive Director, Nevada State Board of Veterinary Medical
Examiners
Stacy Hosking, DVM

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Tony Yarbrough, Bonanza Kennel Club; Veterans of Foreign Wars; United Veterans Legislative Council
Kyle Davis, Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife
Andy LePeilbet, Combat Wounded Veterans of America; Chair, United Veterans Legislative Council
Christi Cabrera, Nevada Conservation League
Tiffany East, Chair, Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of Wildlife
Lynn Chapman, American Legion Auxiliary; Nevada Families for Freedom
Katherine Miller, Director, Department of Veterans Services
Robert Mergell, Administrator, Division of State Parks, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Jaina Moan, The Nature Conservancy
Madelyn Reese, Sierra Club
Jake Tibbitts, Natural Resources Manager, Eureka County

CHAIR DONATE:

We will open the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 101.

ASSEMBLY BILL 101: Revises provisions governing the administration of certain substances to animals by licensed veterinarians. (BDR 54-113)

ASSEMBLYMAN STEVE YEAGER (Assembly District No. 9):

Assembly Bill 101 seeks to ensure the utilization of all available options for the care of pets. Cannabidiol (CBD) for pets is not a new idea or phenomenon, but one whose time has come for inclusion in the *Nevada Revised Statutes*. Just as humans can take advantage of CBD, so should our pets.

JAKOB SCHEIN:

Assembly Bill 101 clarifies legal standards surrounding the administration of CBD to animals. Multiple studies have displayed CBD's medical benefits for animals. As animals age, they can experience joint pain or other pain issues. Cannabidiol can be used to relieve pain without interfering with other medications. Helping mobility issues can improve an animal's quality of life. It is an important medical benefit for veterinarians, yet veterinarians risk disciplinary action for discussing CBD as an option for their patients. Assembly Bill 101 offers clarity ensuring veterinarians will not be punished for recommending CBD as a medical treatment.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Are there U.S. Food and Drug Administration guidelines for administering CBD or hemp to food animals? Could it be administered to cows or horses?

ASSEMBLYMAN YEAGER:

The intent of A.B. 101 is for CBD to be a medical option for companion pets.

JENNIFER PEDIGO (Executive Director, Nevada State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners):

The bill will not supersede federal regulations, and it is not permissible to administer CBD to food animals.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Are you saying you cannot administer to food animals?

MR. PEDIGO:

Yes, CBD is for treatment of companion animals or pets. There have been discussions on allowing CBD to be administered to horses, but not for food animals.

CHAIR DONATE:

How common is this practice of administering CBD to pets in other states, and do other states require additional training for veterinarians to administer CBD to pets?

MS. PEDIGO:

It has not been envisioned in many states. I will get additional information. Professional education for veterinarians is ongoing for new therapeutics.

STACY HOSKING, DVM:

The American Veterinary Medical Association released information in 2020 referencing the use of CBD in pet animals. There are studies on pharmacokinetics, measuring the amount of specific metabolites in the animal's body, and pharmacodynamics, the effects of supplements on animals. Information is available from early fact-finding studies to today's uses and clinical trials.

TONY YARBROUGH (Bonanza Kennel Club):

The Bonanza Kennel Club and many pet owners in Nevada support A.B. 101. The use of CBD in veterinarian treatments has been missing. Veterinarians have been reluctant to address its use.

CHAIR DONATE:

We will close the hearing on A.B. 101 and open the hearing on A.B. 89.

ASSEMBLY BILL 89 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to wildlife.
(BDR 45-588)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ROBIN L. TITUS (Assembly District No. 38):

Assembly Bill 89 authorizes the transfer of hunting tags under certain circumstances. My family and I hold the tradition of hunting dear to our hearts. My parents taught me at an early age the importance of hunting to maintain appropriate populations of wild game and consuming what we harvest. It is important to me to continue this tradition and share my family's knowledge with others.

There are two issues addressed in A.B. 89. First, some big game tags cannot be used because the person who drew the tag does not meet certain requisite conditions for lawful transfer. Second, it allows for increased opportunities to mentor hunters who are 16 years of age or younger, or have a disability or life-threatening medical condition.

Assembly Bill No. 404 of the 80th Session established a program to mentor young hunters in the same family. It authorized the Board of Wildlife Commissioners, under the Department of Wildlife (NDOW), to establish a program whereby a person qualifying with extenuating circumstances, such as injury or illness, may transfer his or her big game hunting tag to another individual, refer use of the tag for the next hunting season or return the tag to NDOW for restoration of bonus points of the person paying for the tag.

In A.B. 89, the Board of Wildlife Commissioners is authorized to adopt regulations establishing a program which authorizes a person to transfer his or her tag to hunt a big game mammal to an eligible qualified organization for use by a person who has a disability or life-threatening medical condition, or is 16 years of age or younger and is otherwise eligible to hunt in the State.

The bill authorizes, under certain conditions, a family member of a deceased big game hunter to transfer a big game tag.

KYLE DAVIS (Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife):

The Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife works with various organizations operating to improve the outdoor experiences for disabled individuals and veterans including Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs.

Many of the disabled and wounded individuals in the programs often live in pain or have diminished life expectancy, and outdoor experiences are some of the best these individuals experience. At the funeral of a child able to take advantage of an antelope hunt through the program offered by Nevada Outdoorsmen in Wheelchairs, his father shared that the child stated the hunt was the highlight of his entire life. Many of the individuals in these programs come with positive attitudes despite all they have to deal with. Many of the experiences are life changing. A man with stage-four liver cancer was taken on a pheasant hunt, and the joy he experienced was incredible.

Assembly Bill 89 seeks to enable more tags be available to the organizations helping the disabled enjoy outdoor experiences. Some tags come from various sources, but this bill will make more available and allow the opportunity for game hunters to provide tags to one of these organizations.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TITUS:

To hunt big game like sheep, deer, elk and antelope in Nevada, there is a process one must go through to get a tag to hunt. The program opens in March, and tags are drawn by a randomized computerized program at the end of May. It is competitive, and the numbers of tags are limited. There were 350,000 applicants last year for 30,000 tags. The tag process is expensive for the applicant. Procuring a tag is a prized item and when unable to use it, alternative options, like those outlined in A.B. 89 for donating tags, help those who would never have the opportunity to hunt.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

A youth tag allows hunting with any weapon in any season. Is this about a youth tag for the 16 years of age or younger provision?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TITUS:

Hunting tags have specific areas, season and animals for their use. Donation of one of these tags is as specified on the tag as issued. It is not a youth tag or any other of the tags issued in a bidding format.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Does the tag from a deceased person go to a family member?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TITUS:

Yes, A.B. 89 allows a family member to use a tag from a deceased family member.

MR. DAVIS:

Section 4.5 of A.B. 89 clarifies the provision allowing the transfer of a big game tag to a family member of a deceased hunter.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:

Section 1, subsection 3, paragraph (b) states the organizations eligible to provide hunting experiences to youth are limited to organizations that serve youth with disabilities or life-threatening medical conditions or whose household incomes are not more than 150 percent of the federally designated level signifying poverty. Is that reflective of existing organizations operating in Nevada? Are there other organizations that should be included, or are other organizations eligible?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TITUS:

The language in A.B. 89 does not eliminate organizations with similar programs. It is at the discretion of NDOW to accept qualifications from other organizations.

MR. DAVIS:

The organizations identified in the bill are preferences, but are not exclusive. The Maison T Ortiz Youth Outdoors Skills Camp has a curriculum for youth to learn about the outdoors, and the After-School All-Stars in southern Nevada works with underprivileged youth. These organizations may qualify for this program.

ANDY LEPEILBET (Combat Wounded Veterans of America; Chair, United Veterans Legislative Council):

The Combat Wounded Veterans of America and the United Veterans Legislative Council support A.B. 89. Outdoor activities have been shown to significantly drop the suicidal behavior of individuals, especially disabled veterans.

TONY YARBROUGH (Veterans of Foreign Wars; United Veterans Legislative Council):

The nearly 9,000 Nevada members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars support A.B. 89. Over one-half million members belong to the United Veterans Legislative Council, inclusive of all the veterans' organizations in Nevada, including disabled veterans, military, National Guard families and their advocates. This bill has unintended benefits. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has spent millions of dollars toward programs to find solutions to the 20 veteran daily suicides. Outdoor activities are making a difference, and the numbers are dropping.

CHRISTI CABRERA (Nevada Conservation League):

The Nevada Conservation League supports A.B. 89. Nevada has incredible outdoor opportunities. Organizations can fulfill their missions of offering outdoor experiences for Nevadans who may not otherwise be able to participate. It instills the values of wildlife conservation to more Nevadans.

TIFFANY EAST (Chair, Board of Wildlife Commissioners, Department of Wildlife):

The Board of Wildlife Commissioners supports A.B. 89. A tag transfer regulation for sportsmen with extenuating circumstances was passed in the Eightieth Legislative Session. Nevada's big game tags are coveted. Several community advisory boards, sportsmen and nongovernmental organizations support or petition the Commission to authorize a tag transfer to a person with a disability, veteran or youth to introduce the sport to new sportsmen with limitations on who may not have the opportunity to enjoy and experience a hunt of this magnitude. This bill will offer memorable outdoor experiences and help recruit new sportsmen and women into the conservation community.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TITUS:

The pandemic has had a huge impact on people's desire to experience the outdoors. Many people are applying for tags, accessing Nevada's State parks and being outdoors. Expanding hunting access by this bill potentially gives more

people the opportunity to enjoy the great hunting outdoor experiences offered by the State.

CHAIR DONATE:

We will close the hearing on A.B. 89 and open the hearing on A.B. 102.

ASSEMBLY BILL 102 (1st Reprint): Revises requirements for the issuance of certain annual permits for entering, camping and boating in state parks and recreational areas. (BDR 35-877)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LISA KRASNER (Assembly District No. 26):

Assembly Bill 102 allows disabled veterans to enter Nevada State parks and recreation areas for free for camping, hiking and boating. They only pay the administrative fee of \$30 per year to receive the annual permit.

Nevada offers beautiful and unique State parks and recreation areas. There are many amazing outdoor opportunities in stunning State parks like Sand Harbor at Lake Tahoe and Valley of Fire in the Mohave Desert. Through the year, we have seen an increase in visitation numbers to Nevada State parks and recreation areas. More people are interested in being outdoors, exercising and enjoying the beauty of our State.

Nevadans pride themselves on honoring the brave men and women who have served in the Nation's armed forces and sacrificed so much to protect us. With A.B. 102, the Legislature extends its appreciation and gratitude to U.S. veterans who have a service-connected disability. It allows all disabled veterans who have been honorably discharged to experience Nevada's State parks and recreation areas to find relief and enjoy the outdoors.

The Division of State Parks of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources offers annual permits for State parks and recreation areas to disabled veterans who have a service-connected disability of 10 percent or more. Assembly Bill 102 proposes in section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (d), subparagraph (2) to remove the requirement for any percent of a service-connected disability. A disabled veteran who has been honorably discharged and has a service-connected disability in any amount qualifies for free entry into Nevada State parks and recreation areas. This bill was chosen as one of the top priority bills by Nevada's Department of Veterans Services.

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SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Do veterans still have to pay the administrative fee for a pass?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN KRASNER:

Yes, normally the pass is \$250 per year. With the provision in A.B. 102, the disabled veteran will pay just \$30 for the administrative fee for the annual pass.

Mr. YARBROUGH:

The Veterans of Foreign Wars and the United Veterans Legislative Council, Nevada Department of Veterans Services support A.B. 102. This is the third attempt to get this bill to this level. It is our goal to reduce any potential of suicide, and this will get people outdoors to enjoy our natural resources.

MR. LEPEILBET:

Combat Wounded Veterans of America and the United Veterans Legislative Council support A.B. 102. Our disabled veterans do not take advantage of Nevada's parks and recreation areas. For their mental health, this essential change needs to be made. Many younger veterans returning after multiple tours of duty have service-connected disabilities of less than 10 percent. Similar legislation has been achieved for national parks.

SENATOR BROOKS:

How will the members of your affiliated organizations be made aware of the benefits of the bill?

MR. LEPEILBET:

The United Veterans Legislative Council sends a communication to 250 key people in the veteran community. It will be posted on the Department of Veteran Services website. There are other veterans groups receiving communications from us.

LYNN CHAPMAN (American Legion Auxiliary; Nevada Families for Freedom):

The American Legion Auxiliary and Nevada Families for Freedom support A.B. 102. The costs for the many types of recreation available in Nevada should be kept reasonable for families. An honorably discharged disabled veteran in Nevada has earned the right to enjoy the outdoors and beauty of the State without paying a fee.

KATHERINE MILLER (Director, Department of Veterans Services):

The Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) is neutral on A.B. 102. During its 2020 Veterans Legislative Symposia, Nevada's veteran service organizations prioritized 11 critical recommendations on veteran issues. The sixth in priority is for Nevada to reduce or eliminate Nevada State park fees for all veterans.

In March 2021, NDVS was asked to provide an estimated number of disabled veterans with less than a 10-percent disability evaluation who might benefit from A.B. 102. On April 13, 2021, data was received in response to our query to the Veterans Benefit Administration under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The number of service-connected disabled veterans who fall beneath the 10-percent threshold is 2,230. This bill will expand the eligibility of 61,113 veterans by 2,230, just over 3 percent—not all of whom will avail themselves of this benefit.

ROBERT MERGELL (Administrator, Division of State Parks, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources):

The Division of State Parks is neutral on A.B. 102. The disabled veteran's annual permit has been well received by veterans. Nevada State parks sold 886 disabled veterans annual permits in 2020. Removing the 10-percent requirement will make permits available to more disabled veterans and allow them the opportunity to visit their State parks.

CHAIR DONATE:

I will close the hearing on A.B. 102 and open the hearing on Assembly Joint Resolution (A.J.R.) 2.

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION 2 (1st Reprint): Recognizes that the health of forests, rangelands and soils are inextricably linked to the quantity and quality of water. (BDR R-112)

SENATOR MELANIE SCHEIBLE (Senatorial District No. 9):

Assembly Joint Resolution 2 recognizes that forest health and water quality are inextricably linked. The resolution is one of the measures proposed by the Committee to Conduct an Interim Study Concerning Wildfires. One amendment to the resolution was adopted by the Nevada State Assembly.

During the 2019-2020 Interim, the Committee to Conduct an Interim Study Concerning Wildfires heard testimony on the catastrophic impacts wildfires have

on watersheds and the conservation science practices that might aid wildfire management.

Healthy forests work as organic filters to keep sediment and other contaminants out of water. They operate as natural sponges by collecting precipitation. The ability of forests to aid in filtration of water provides benefits to the ecosystem and the public health of our communities as it reduces the need for water treatment. The loss and degradation of forests negatively impact water quality in watersheds and increase the risk of depleted groundwater levels.

Assembly Joint Resolution 2 recognizes that forest health and water quality are inextricably linked and expresses support for the federal government, State agencies and local governments to work with water purveyors and other stakeholders to identify watersheds that can be improved by better forest health measures.

JAINA MOAN (The Nature Conservancy):

I will present A.J.R. 2 with a slide presentation ([Exhibit B](#)) which addresses issues important to Nevada. The resolution acknowledges the links between forested and vegetated landscapes and water resources as inextricable. These lands form the watersheds that store and distribute water used for drinking, irrigating and recreating. The waters flowing from the snowcapped mountain ranges are the lifeblood of the driest State in the Union sustaining both people and nature.

For the past two decades, The Nature Conservancy has promoted the health of the Truckee River, investing over \$50 million in its restoration and protection. Most recently, the restoration is focusing on the headwaters forest in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and others.

The infographic on page 2 of [Exhibit B](#) is specific to the Truckee River Watershed. The links demonstrated on this page can be extrapolated to most of the watersheds in Nevada. Healthy forests maximize snow retention, meter snowmelt and water delivery and naturally filter water. They support fish and wildlife and provide water supporting homes, businesses and agriculture and places to recreate. These systems are important to our way of life and our economy.

One spark in the wrong place, on the wrong day, can change everything. When landscapes are struck by unnaturally large and intense wildfires, the postfire impacts can be devastating. Catastrophic wildfires, as shown in the photo on the left of page 3 of [Exhibit B](#), leave denuded landscapes, depicted in the middle photo on page 3. Heavy precipitation run-off results in sediment, ash and debris transported into waterways and water bodies. The impacts can last for many years. The photos on page 3 show the northern part of the Rio Grande Watershed in New Mexico. Events like this happen in Nevada and across the Western U.S.

In 2017, the Slinkard Fire burned 9,000 acres in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California, just across Nevada's Stateline. The photos on page 4 show the aftermath of the Slinkard Fire in 2018 when rain deluged the area. It was fortunate the sludge resulting from the rains did not reach Topaz Lake as shown in the background of the bottom photo on page 4 of [Exhibit B](#).

Wildfire threatens Nevada rangelands. The South Sugarloaf Fire in Elko County burned 235,000 acres of forest and rangelands. Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded a \$250,000 grant to Nevada for postfire rehabilitation. I will read from page 5 of [Exhibit B](#), the press release by the USDA highlighting the impacts of the fire to water quality in the relying communities:

The fire adversely impacted the drainage basins to Wildhorse Reservoir, the Owyhee River, and the North Fork of the Humboldt River. These are all major water sources for members of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley and residents of Elko and Twin Falls counties.

One aim of [A.J.R. 2](#) is to secure more funding for enhancing soil and landscape health ensuring resiliency for water supplies. Protecting Nevada from unwanted impacts to forests, rangelands and water resources is the goal. The resolution memorializes important links between forests, rangeland and soil health and quantity and quality of State waters. It encourages cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders for tackling this important issue.

Amendments included in [A.J.R. 2](#) came from The Nature Conservancy and Eureka County. Eureka County added language about rangelands, soil health and conservation districts. The goal of the resolution is to open the door to

additional resources for restoring and maintaining soil and ecosystem health in the watersheds of Nevada's forests and rangelands.

MADELYN REESE (Sierra Club):

The more than 30,000 members of the Sierra Club in Nevada support A.J.R. 2. Forest health, water quality and water quantity are inextricably linked. Even as a youth growing up near a forest, I was aware to not take it for granted. The air quality of the nearby city was worse than the air near the forest, and the rain collected on the ground was dotted in oil.

Reinforcement of this knowledge is needed, and the resolution recognizes that healthy forests provide benefits beyond clean available water. They provide wildlife habitat, air purification and oxygen production. Visiting healthy forests supports Nevada's \$12.6 billion recreation economy. It is hoped the resolution will encourage and empower relevant agencies, water purveyors and other stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate on science-based data-driven efforts to nurture healthy forests.

MS. CABRERA:

The Nevada Conservation League supports A.J.R. 2. Nevadans place a high value on their water resources. Forests play a critical role in collecting, filtering and storing water which is tied to water quality. Drought, heat and wildfire threaten our forests and are exacerbated by climate change. Cooperation and coordination among land managers and water purveyors is valuable.

JAKE TIBBITTS (Natural Resources Manager, Eureka County)

Eureka County supports A.J.R. 2 for recognizing healthy forests, rangelands and soils. The focus on collaboration with private land owners, land users, local governments and conservation districts is necessary for success. The resolution expresses the need to identify or establish voluntary programs to address Nevada's land health.

CHAIR DONATE:

We will close the hearing on A.J.R. 2.

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CHAIR DONATE:

With no further business, we will adjourn this meeting at 4:55 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Christine Miner,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Fabian Donate, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Begins on Page	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
A.J.R. 2	B	2	Jaina Moan / The Nature Conservancy	Visual Presentation