

Senate Joint Resolution No. 3—
Committee on Natural Resources

FILE NUMBER.....

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging the United States Bureau of Reclamation to consider certain actions, alternatives and measures for the protection and management of the Colorado River.

WHEREAS, The Colorado River is the most vital water source in Nevada and much of the western United States, sustaining the life and livelihood of 7 western states, 22 Indian tribes and Mexico; and

WHEREAS, The Colorado River supports the needs of 40 million people in the United States and Mexico, irrigates over 5 million acres of land, generates hydropower for several million people and supports recreational and tourism industries; and

WHEREAS, Ninety percent of Southern Nevada's water supply comes from the Colorado River via Lake Mead; and

WHEREAS, Facing unprecedented drought and aridification, the Colorado River is in crisis with Lake Mead currently at 28 percent capacity; and

WHEREAS, The Colorado River is also overallocated with more water committed for use than is available from the Colorado River in an average year resulting in a structural deficit in the Colorado River; and

WHEREAS, The seven Colorado River Basin states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming have yet to reach a consensus on a plan to decrease current water use; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Government intends to take unilateral action regarding the management of the Colorado River if the Colorado River Basin states do not present a reasonable plan for water management; and

WHEREAS, The Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Colorado River Commission, on behalf of the State of Nevada, have urged all users of the Colorado River in every state and sector to work together towards a solution to the water crisis and to reduce water demands to reflect the hydrological reality of the Colorado River Basin; and

WHEREAS, In August 2022, the Southern Nevada Water Authority, on behalf of the State of Nevada, submitted a letter to the United States Bureau of Reclamation listing 12 recommendations to address the crisis on the Colorado River, including adopting methods to account for evaporation and system losses in the



Colorado River and investing in long-term, durable water conservation to permanently reduce the structural deficit in the Colorado River; and

WHEREAS, In November 2022, the United States Bureau of Reclamation announced its intention to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement for the December 2007 Record of Decision entitled “Colorado River Interim Guidelines for Lower Basin Shortages and Coordinated Operations for Lake Powell and Lake Mead”; and

WHEREAS, In December 2022, the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Colorado River Commission, on behalf of the State of Nevada, submitted a proposed alternative to the United States Bureau of Reclamation for consideration in the supplemental environmental impact statement process that presented recommendations to address the structural deficit in the Colorado River; and

WHEREAS, In January 2023, representatives of Nevada joined with the representatives of five other Colorado River Basin states to submit to the United States Bureau of Reclamation a Consensus-Based Modeling Alternative to help stabilize the water levels of Lake Mead and Lake Powell and asked the Bureau to consider and model the Consensus-Based Modeling Alternative in the supplemental environmental impact statement process; and

WHEREAS, The recommendations of Nevada and the Consensus-Based Modeling Alternative to address the Colorado River crisis present a solid starting point for further discussions on the management of the Colorado River; and

WHEREAS, The current Colorado River crisis is dire but solvable if the Colorado River Basin States, the Federal Government and Mexico cooperate to address the crisis; and

WHEREAS, Federal money and other funding mechanisms can aid with short-term water management and prevent the future depletion of the already depleted Colorado River, but the long-term sustainability of the Colorado River system requires the investment of additional money to implement permanent reductions in demand for Colorado River water; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the 82nd Session of the Nevada Legislature strongly support the pursuit of a collaboration-based framework to address the structural deficit in the Colorado River; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the members of the 82nd Session of the Nevada Legislature support the inclusion of mechanisms to account



for evaporation and system losses in the Colorado River in the future management of the Colorado River; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the members of the 82nd Session of the Nevada Legislature hereby urge the United States Bureau of Reclamation to amend existing federal regulations to prohibit the inefficient delivery, application or use of any water from the Colorado River by all sectors and users of water from the Colorado River to limit unnecessary water losses on the Colorado River; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the United States Secretary of the Interior, the United States Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Nevada Congressional Delegation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.

20 ~~~~~ 23

