

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Eighty-Second Session  
March 6, 2023**

The Committee on Natural Resources was called to order by Chair Lesley E. Cohen at 4:02 p.m. on Monday, March 6, 2023, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada, and to Room 130, Greenhaw Technical Arts Building, Great Basin College, 1500 College Parkway, Elko, 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/82nd2023](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Chair  
Assemblywoman Natha C. Anderson, Vice Chair  
Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod  
Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May  
Assemblywoman Venicia Considine  
Assemblyman Rich DeLong  
Assemblywoman Bea Duran  
Assemblyman Bert Gurr  
Assemblywoman Alexis Hansen  
Assemblywoman Selena La Rue Hatch  
Assemblyman Howard Watts  
Assemblyman Toby Yurek

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

None

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Nicolas C. Anthony, Committee Policy Analyst  
Nancy Davis, Committee Secretary  
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant

Minutes ID: 373





**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Mary Farnsworth, Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Kacey KC, State Forester Firewarden, Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Bill Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Lisa Ortega, Executive Director, Nevada Plants

Kandice Townsend, Government Affairs Specialist, City of North Las Vegas

Kathy Flanagan, Senior Public Affairs Analyst, Southern Nevada Water Authority

Cadence Matijevich, Government Affairs Liaison, Office of the County Manager, Washoe County

Hailey Elmore, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Annette Magnus, Executive Director, Battle Born Progress

Peter Gower, Nevada Strategy Director, Energy, Infrastructure and Land Use, The Nature Conservancy

Steve Walker, representing Eureka County

Prince Cunanan Saruhan, representing Faith in Action Nevada; and Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

Chris Mendoza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Joanne Leovy, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Andrew Sierra, representing Nevada Conservation League

Nick Christenson, representing Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club

Samuel Cano, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Marina Bahena, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Elizabeth Ortiz, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Eztli Amaya, Environmental Justice Organizer, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

Jaaziel Ozuna, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada

Aaron Harris, Private Citizen, Henderson, Nevada

Angel Lazcano, Organizer, Somos Votantes

James Katzen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Dora Martinez, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada

Patrick Donnelly, Nevada State Director, Center for Biological Diversity

Juan Lizarraga, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Laekyn Kelley, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Martha Moreno, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Kyle Roerink, Executive Director, Great Basin Water Network

John Hadder, Director, Great Basin Resource Watch

Winona Freed, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Teresa Melendez, representing Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

Olivia Tanager, Program Manager, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

Christi Cabrera-Georgeson, Deputy Director, Nevada Conservation League

Cinthia Moore, Coalition Coordinator, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition



James Phoenix, Chairman, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe  
Maria-Teresa Liebermann-Parraga, Deputy Director, Battle Born Progress  
Stacey Montooth, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada  
Jennifer Carr, P.E., Deputy Administrator, Administrative Services and Water  
Programs, Division of Environmental Protection, State Department of  
Conservation and Natural Resources

**Chair Cohen:**

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were reviewed.] We are going to move to the bill draft request (BDR) introduction.

**BDR 18-470**—Revises provisions relating to water. (Later introduced as [Assembly Bill 261](#).)

I will entertain a motion to introduce BDR 18-470.

ASSEMBLYMAN DELONG MADE A MOTION FOR COMMITTEE  
INTRODUCTION OF BILL DRAFT REQUEST 18-470.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion? Seeing none, we will vote.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

I will move on to our presentation on Nevada Shared Stewardship and the Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

**Mary Farnsworth, Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, Forest Service, U.S.  
Department of Agriculture:**

I would like to begin with a quick overview of the Forest Service [[Exhibit C](#)]. The Forest Service manages and protects about 154 national forests and 20 grasslands in 44 states and Puerto Rico. We have a pretty big job to do. As a regional forester, I am responsible for 12 national forests in six states. I am joining you here today to talk about Nevada, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and the wonderful partnership that we have. We are a multiple use agency and we have a lot of responsibilities. Mr. Dunkelberger is the forest supervisor here on the Humboldt-Toiyabe. He manages an area that covers about six million acres. That is a lot of ground and a lot of issues to address. There are many multiple use things going on. Very specifically, I want to talk a little bit about shared stewardship, and I want to talk a little bit about the wildfire crisis. The Humboldt-Toiyabe is the largest national forest in the lower 48 states; it is very large. It also has about one million acres in California that Mr. Dunkelberger manages on his landscape. It is a big job, and I wanted to give that overview before I pass it to Ms. KC to talk a little bit about shared stewardship and our wonderful partnership.



**Kacey KC, State Forester Firewarden, Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:**

You just heard from me on shared stewardship, so I am not going to repeat everything, but I do want to reiterate a couple of things. The Forest Service and the state forestry agencies have worked together for over 100 years. When the Forest Service was created, they quickly worked together with the states to manage all the forests in the United States and the islands.

When the concept came out for the Nevada Shared Stewardship Agreement, we were the first state in all of the 50 states to come up with an agreement that was bigger than just the U.S. Forest Service and the state forestry agencies [page 3, [Exhibit C](#)]. We recognized that we needed to include all of our federal partners, all our state partners, other local government partners, and tribes. We had a more inclusive shared stewardship agreement for how we were going to address the growing wildfire concerns in the state of Nevada.

The purpose of the exercise was to direct our staffs, along with all of the equipment that we had, to comanage this risk together. We needed to prioritize the areas in the state in which the risk was the highest and we needed to focus our limited funding and our limited resources in those areas. The map, which you have seen before, shows the 13 identified highest priority landscapes across Nevada, agreed upon by all of the agencies who were a part of that. There were some deliverables that were put into the agreement, which creates an executive committee. That committee has been created and has been operating since the beginning of the agreement. We were to increase our annual acres treated by 50 percent by the year 2025. We have not hit that number yet, but we are at a 48 percent average increase each year since the creation of this program, which was without additional funding. That was our staff working together to really make this effort go.

Today we are going to announce the exciting new money that will hopefully push us over a 50 percent increase. We did create a strategic plan—we were working on that anyway—through the cohesive strategy. Currently, at the local level, we are working on a five-year program of work, ensuring our staff at each of these local areas agree on the highest priority areas and how we are going to implement that at the ground level.

**Mary Farnsworth:**

The shared stewardship situation we have in Nevada has set us up extremely well for this moment. I would like to talk a little bit about fire. The Forest Service, as an agency, has developed a wildfire crisis strategy to address fire as the emergency it is, not just when the fires are burning but before so we could get in front of it [page 4]. That includes doing some modeling around mapping, using some best available science at this time. Those mapped areas show us where the greatest amount of risk is to communities and/or infrastructure.

Those mapped firesheds, as we call them, tie directly in with the map around shared stewardship. They are the same; it is not a big mystery why they are the same. We know these places as fire agencies, both state partners and the Forest Service. These firesheds are very important because it has allowed us to focus on the right places in priority to get the work done. In the past, we have really done a lot of work all over the place, and that has not



necessarily served us well. It has been great work, but we need to treat the right places at the right scale to really make a difference on the landscape.

I would like to talk a little bit about the happy place we find ourselves in right now: the ten-year wildfire crisis strategy addresses the places where fire is of immediate risk to communities. The Forest Service has done the planning, and certainly with the State Forester Firewarden's help and our partners, we have identified those areas. Congress has given us the funds to do the work. I am happy to report that the agency is investing \$57 million across two landscapes in Nevada; \$57 million is quite a substantial amount of funds. Mr. Dunkelberger's normal fuels budget is about \$2.5 million. We are exponentially working on addressing the emergency that we have around fire: right now, in the right places, at the right scale.

It is quite amazing that the work with a shared stewardship and help of the State Forester has gotten us to the place where Nevada is seen as a wise investment for getting this work done to protect and reduce the at-risk communities. The \$57 million is for 2023. There is more investment next year and the year after. Over the course of the next seven to ten years, we hope to treat about 200,000 acres across these landscapes. That is a very big investment in the right places. We are pretty buzzed up about that. All the money is not going to Forest Service employees. A lot of the work is going to be done by our partners. We are working very closely with partners as well as contractors that can add capacity and get the work done for us. This is also about jobs in those places where we are doing these treatments. It is quite exciting. I wanted to give you a report about our investment here in Nevada on the Sierra Front and around the Elko Front. Those are the two areas that were deemed by the shared stewardship partnership to be of most risk of catastrophic fire. We are going to do something about it. We are pretty excited about the work we get to do over the next few years. We are available for questions.

**Assemblywoman Brown-May:**

The collaboration that you are exhibiting throughout Nevada is really exemplary and we appreciate that. My question is relative to your talking about "right now, right places." What are the criteria? How do you determine what the right places to start are when you are assessing where to start the work first?

**Bill Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture:**

In the process of Nevada Shared Stewardship, as Ms. KC mentioned, it is not only the Forest Service and the Division of Forestry, but there are also the Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Department of Wildlife, and State Department of Agriculture all working together. We have a technical advisory team. They looked at a whole bunch of layers; for example, critical wildlife habitat, critical infrastructure, and critical watersheds for drinking water. We layered all of those on top of each other. That is how we came up with those 13 priority landscapes. Coincidentally, the Forest Service also modeled for fire risk, and identified seven major fire sheds in the Elko and the Sierra Front areas that overlapped with



the priorities that we had already picked. I think that shows that our science was good, and this validated it. That is how we decided where we were going to do the work.

**Assemblywoman Brown-May:**

It is great to know that much of the work was at first comprehensive, but when layered on top of each other, you are seeing the same analysis, giving you the same result. That is great to know. Do we have enough people to do the work that is in front of us? How do we staff that out?

**Mary Farnsworth:**

It is a bit of a struggle right now. Everybody understands the hiring arena that we are in is very challenging. I think the answer to your question is, it is going to take all of us to do this work. It is going to take private industry; it is going to take partners; it is going to take Forest Service employees to administer contracts; and it is going to take tribal entities who can do the work. We have several amazing partners. It is going to take all of us, and we have to diversify who is doing the work or we will not get it done. It is very important that we all seek economic development opportunities for woods crews, all kinds of woods work because we are going to need to build some infrastructure. There is no one answer; it is everything to work at this magnitude. This is quite different from where we have been in past years.

**Assemblyman DeLong:**

I have a question or maybe some clarification about the Sierra Front area. Looking at this map, obviously, it is kind of small scale. It looks like the Sierra Front goes into the Tahoe Basin. Have you been coordinating with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)? They have some very significant restrictions on land use activities. I also want to know the same thing with the Tahoe National Forest.

**Bill Dunkelberger:**

Most of the Tahoe Basin is not included. They are covered by other high-priority fire work with the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act and the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. However, we do go over to the east shore. We have been coordinating closely with the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, with TRPA, and also the Tahoe National Forest. We abut one of their priority landscapes or wildfire crisis priorities. We will actually be looking at doing some work in the Verdi-Dog Valley area. We are excited that we will be able to match all the good work that they are doing on the Tahoe side.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

Ms. Farnsworth, you mentioned treatment. I am thinking about the areas that you mentioned and have been highlighted: Elko and the Sierras. I am thinking different landscapes, different habitats. What do those treatments look like in those zones?

**Mary Farnsworth:**

I will answer initially and pass it to Ms. KC. Different landscapes require different treatments. Our forests and grasslands are in various states of forest health. There are



thinning treatments; there are all kinds of things that happen on these landscapes. It is not a uniform treatment, or one size fits all.

**Kacey KC:**

I think what we are looking at is locally led initiatives. That was one of the things that we were keen on doing and one of the reasons these top two landscapes moved up to the top so quickly. We did get our staff together; they have formed local working groups. These working groups are looking at the ground level, which is where the needs are on some of the Forest Service or federal lands, and where we are going to be able to put those treatments. Those working groups are working through their process and telling us what type of treatment: is it prescribed fire, is it mechanical, or is it hand thinning? There are also some herbicide applications. There is a whole bunch of different stuff that is going to need to happen. Also, where do we take the wood? Any issues that they face at that local level, they are pushing up to the executive committee or the technical advisory committee to help figure out how we might help them through the process to get it done quicker. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a hurdle for us; I am getting NEPA ready. These are the areas we can go to right now. We are planning ahead. We are trying to get contractors. The state has contracted NEPA services; the federal government has contracted NEPA services. We are all looking at how we can collectively work as quickly as possible to implement multiple treatments on the landscape.

**Bill Dunkelberger:**

It really depends on the vegetation condition, as Ms. Farnsworth mentioned, and the proximity to communities. We would like to be able to do a lot of prescribed burning, which is very effective if you do it at the right time of the year. However, we are not going to be lighting big prescribed fires right next to suburbs. In those areas, we would probably choose hand thinning and then piling and burning selectively during the winter when there is snow on the ground, or maybe what we call a mastication, which is running a large chipping type machine through the vegetation and mulching it. It really depends. [Also provided but not mentioned is [Exhibit D](#).]

**Chair Cohen:**

Seeing no further questions, thank you very much for the presentation. I will now turn the Chair over to Assemblywoman Anderson.

[Assemblywoman Anderson assumed the Chair.]

**Vice Chair Anderson:**

I will open the hearing on [Assembly Bill 131](#).

**[Assembly Bill 131](#):** Revises provisions governing urban and community forestry.  
(BDR 47-720)



**Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Assembly District No. 29:**

With me today is Ms. Ortega, who is the only female International Society of Arboriculture registered master arborist in the state of Nevada and a registered consulting arborist with the American Society of Consulting Arborists. Ms. Ortega has worked in urban forestry in Nevada for over 25 years and has worked for both the state of Nevada and the city of Henderson as their first urban forester. She owns her own business, Arid Lands Horticulture Consulting. In 2021 she created Nevada Plants, a tree-planting nonprofit focused on trees and tree education.

Ms. Ortega and I have been friends on social media for a few years. I knew in the abstract that she had been doing really good work in our communities with trees. Last summer when she posted something on social media about wanting to see some legislation regarding urban and community forestry, I messaged her asking what that would entail. After many meetings and research, we are here happy to present Assembly Bill 131. I refer to this bill as the happy little bill for happy little trees, and this bill is happy.

However, the issues this bill addresses are very serious. We are talking about heat islands, poor air quality, poor soil health, and food insecurity. All of these are very harmful to Nevada families. As you will hear today, A.B. 131 helps solve these problems and makes our communities healthier for our families.

**Lisa Ortega, Executive Director, Nevada Plants:**

Assembly Bill 131 revises provisions governing urban community forestry. Trees reduce the urban heat island, food deserts, hot playgrounds, hot streets, and hot tempers [page 1, [Exhibit E](#)]. Trees are some of the most prominent natural features in towns and cities from both visual and functional perspectives. The urban forest is a key type of the green infrastructure system in our cities and towns. Urban forests are critical to mental and physical health. Access to trees can help reduce individual stress, improve mental health, strengthen immune systems, reduce crime, and improve student academic performance. Exposure to urban forests reduces mental and physical stress, anxiety, depression, and improves moods. Trees build people's capacities by strengthening the immune system and motivating active living.

Urban forests clean our air. It is a great thing; they mitigate air pollution and clean our air by holding particulates and sequestering carbon. Nevada residents living in high-pollution areas experience more hospitalization. Effects of chronic air pollution exposure have higher instances of pregnancy complications for both the mother and the child. Pollution creates more memory loss in older people, and a higher instance of Parkinson's disease and diabetes.

Urban forests slow climate change; cooling services are provided by trees, their shade, and their evaporate transpiration. Trees remove climate-warming greenhouse gasses from the air. Tree canopies provide a measure of protection against harmful ultraviolet rays. The picture on page 4 is of Clark County. The bright red and orange are the hottest of the urban heat island, moving from the yellow to the green.



Page 5 [[Exhibit E](#)] shows what it looks like up close. Urban forests remediate urban heat islands. Urban heat islands are over 10 degrees hotter. I just watched a video from the Southern Nevada Water Authority, and they showed 17 degrees hotter. Heat island effects fall disproportionately on people in lower income neighborhoods and people of color. High heat health impacts include heat-related fainting, heat exhaustion, and fatal heatstroke. This is happening more and more. It affects the very old, the very young, pregnant women, outdoor workers, and athletes. People with other health conditions such as diabetes struggle in the excessive heat.

Urban forests are more robust in Nevada in wealthier community areas across the state. There is urban heat inequity. Looking at the graph of Reno on page 6, it is the same in Las Vegas—higher income, more trees. Urban forestry should also consider underserved communities, northeastern Nevada, tribes, and others that maybe currently are not being considered or served.

Urban forests improve communities for our families and our children. They improve school greening, bus stops, and high-use pedestrian routes. Tribes need trees for shade. Small communities need trees for shade and tourism. Urban forests improve our riparian corridors and our river parkways, such as the one in Reno. Urban forests improve parks, trails, shading, and a reduction of energy bills for our folks. We need urban and community forestry. We are losing more trees in the Las Vegas Valley than we are planting, by far. We are experiencing more drought. Planting trees reduces energy use for residents; planting trees remediates air pollution, urban heat islands, and food deserts. Trees reduce stormwater runoff; they hold the soil and contribute to wildlife. Urban forests increase physical and mental health.

Some of the urban forestry considerations include appropriate canopy targets. What are the energy savings when we plant on the south and west side? What is the water use? What are the best forestry practices?

Assembly Bill 131 offers us a solution. The first few sections of the bill provide some definitions including the definitions for "urban and community forest," which is summarized as the science of developing and caring for trees in an urban environment to enhance air and water quality, provide shade, stabilize soils, reduce noise levels, and other benefits as we have discussed.

Section 6 creates the Urban and Community Forestry Program within the Division of Forestry (NDF). This program will promote, create, improve, and maintain urban and community forests. It will help with technical assistance and provide various improvements. In order to do this, the State Forester Firewarden is required to develop targets for urban tree canopies with a focus on developing targets in historically underserved communities and areas vulnerable to heat islands. The State Forester Firewarden is also required to cooperate with forestry organizations and government agencies to advance and promote urban forests and develop best practices for maintaining the health of urban forests.



Section 7 requires the Division of Forestry to provide technical assistance to state and local governments on urban forests relating to planning and land use, training programs, urban forest health, and other matters.

Section 8 authorizes the State Forester Firewarden to establish a program to distribute grants that will support urban forestry. This includes grants to promote community involvement with planning and planting urban forests, developing educational materials, grants for maintenance programs, and grants for other related projects. It also requires the State Forester Firewarden to adopt regulations to carry out the grant program.

Section 9 allows the State Forester Firewarden to enter into cooperative agreements to apply for and accept gifts, grants, services, and donations in furtherance of the urban and community forestry program and to adopt regulations to carry out this act.

Lastly, section 10 provides that the bill is effective upon passage for purposes of performing preparatory administrative tasks and to adopt any regulations and on January 1, 2024, for all other purposes.

In conclusion, I thank you for considering A.B. 131. There are many benefits of urban forests on everything from mitigating the detrimental impacts of urban heat islands and improving our air quality to the positive contributions that urban forests can make on mental health and on creating opportunities for social interaction. By creating green infrastructures in our communities, we can improve the lives of Nevadans all across the state. I urge you to support the bill.

**Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch:**

I agree with you that trees have all of these benefits. I recently presented a soil health presentation and I know that our trees and healthy soils go hand in hand. My question stems from something that was written on the fiscal note. I know we are not considering the fiscal note in this policy Committee, but it said in the note that NDF has the ability and currently does meet the obligation set forth in this statutory change under existing authorities. It sounds like NDF is already doing the things that are laid out in the bill. Could you speak to why this program is necessary beyond what NDF is already doing?

**Lisa Ortega:**

I think this is a much broader piece. The urban heat island maps are new. I do not think there has been any work done in those areas for that reason. Not to mention, as of last year, the U.S. Forest Service did not allow planting on private property. We have been working with Washington, D.C., to try to make that happen for equity. Equity and those kinds of things have never been talked about until this last year. I think that codifying them is good. I think that supporting them is good. I will say that NDF does a great job and they do have an urban forestry program.



**Assemblywoman Cohen:**

We did communicate with our Forester Firewarden before bringing the bill. What we see here is an enhancement. There is a program and there are some federal things going on as well, and we do believe that this is necessary for enhancement.

**Assemblyman DeLong:**

How does this program relate with the county and city parks and recreation departments that are responsible for maintaining urban green spaces?

**Lisa Ortega:**

I think it marries with them. We have a 2050 master plan from the city of Las Vegas that is already calling for 60,000 trees. ImpactNV is a new nonprofit that is looking at 100,000 trees in Henderson, Las Vegas, and Reno. Reno just started the ReLEAF Reno program. They are active in tree planting, and they also have urban heat islands, and they also have equity issues in the urban forests in communities. They are all working on it. The great thing is we have all been able to get together and say what we all are working on and how we can best work together so that we are not fragmented and working all over the place. We have a dedicated way that we are going to work together.

**Assemblywoman Considine:**

The district I represent is on the east side of Las Vegas. There are a lot of heat islands. One of the things that I see is folks in older neighborhoods have taken out all the grass and replaced it with rocks. Is there a component to this, education wise, about how you can have trees and rocks? It is a way to help cool your house. It is a way to cut down on air-conditioning. For a decade, the idea was just rip everything out of your yard and put in an extreme desert landscaping. We need to show how this will work to help some of those neighborhood heat islands.

**Lisa Ortega:**

There is something to be said about being on the east side of Las Vegas and having a south-facing window with no shade. There is something to be said about that, and that is, This tree died and I will not replace it. No big deal. It is just another tree. Then you see the eight-month-old in the crib who has to be right against the south wall in a very small home. They have to run the air-conditioning all the time due to that south-facing window, or west-facing windows. We are finding that the bills for air-conditioning are increasing as we remove the transpiration ability of turfgrass and also just denuding the landscape. I think Southern Nevada Water Authority is working very hard. They are working on some videos in collaboration of how to preserve mature trees during a turfgrass conversion so that we can try to hang on to as many of the mature trees as we can while we reduce water usage.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

This bill would be an enhancement. I have read the bill, but will you spotlight what those enhancements are per se?



**Assemblywoman Cohen:**

I certainly do not want to say that I am an expert on what the program is that exists, but in speaking with the Forester Firewarden, I know that there is an existing program. We feel like we are adding to what they already have. The Forester Firewarden is here to testify in neutral, and she is willing to take some questions at that time.

**Lisa Ortega:**

The bill gets more specific in that in the past, we might have planted a tree at a school, and that is great. Now we are calling for school greening and it is different that we are asking for shade. We did not even know that food deserts existed until the U.S. Department of Agriculture put out a map just over a year ago. We were not working on remediating urban heat islands and food deserts. We did not know any of those things until just recently. We are asking NDF to work on the technical pieces, those maps that we know exist that did not exist in the past.

**Vice Chair Anderson:**

Seeing no further questions, we will now hear testimony on A.B. 131. Is there anyone wishing to provide testimony in support?

**Kandice Townsend, Government Affairs Specialist, City of North Las Vegas:**

The City of North Las Vegas is in support of A.B. 131. We look forward to partnering with the Urban and Community Forestry Program on helping provide more green spaces for residents of the City of North Las Vegas. We thank you for bringing this forward. It is an important initiative, and we are happy to support it.

**Kathy Flanagan, Senior Public Affairs Analyst, Southern Nevada Water Authority:**

The Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) Water Smart Landscapes rebate program provides a \$3 per square foot rebate for turf conversions. This program also has a requirement that at least 50 percent of the converted area have trees, shrubs, and plants. Since 1999, this program has saved 152 billion gallons of water. You hear SNWA call for conservation, but trees are not the problem. The SNWA likes trees and we support this bill.

**Cadence Matijevich, Government Affairs Liaison, Office of the County Manager, Washoe County:**

I am happy to be here in support of this bill today. We love trees in Washoe County for all the reasons that you have heard and all the benefits that trees provide to our communities and to Nevadans. If I may, I heard a couple of questions about what this does for local governments and parks and recreation departments. We see a couple of things. Section 7 of the bill provides for technical assistance to local governments. We think that is important when we are working together, and we can share that information that helps the trees in our community. Section 8 deals with grants. We all like to think that money grows on trees; well, maybe we can grow some money for some trees with this bill. Section 9, similarly, authorizes entering into cooperative agreements on behalf of the state and political subdivisions. We think that there are some efficiencies and economies of scale that could be gained from that. For all of those reasons, we are in support of this bill.



**Hailey Elmore, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am here to testify in support of A.B. 131. I live on the east side of Las Vegas, Nevada. I am 15 and attend Chaparral High School. The back gate to our school is less than 200 feet from Interstate 95. Having the interstate so close and a lack of trees, we have a higher amount of pollution in our school area. On the other side of the interstate and surrounding the high school is mostly residential area. Children who grow up in areas with high pollution have more chances of developing asthma and have reduced lung functions as adults. A study in Britain showed a connection between growing up in a neighborhood with high pollution and intellectual disability. One study in Chile shows that high school students scored worse on tests on days with high levels of pollution. Another study in New York connected pollutants with attention and learning difficulties. This is why I support and hope that you will support Assembly Bill 131. This bill is for the trees we plant and will create a better community for future generations.

**Annette Magnus, Executive Director, Battle Born Progress:**

We are in strong support of A.B. 131. I am often called a tree hugger and I will totally lean in on that for this bill. Not only would urban forestry mitigate the urban island heat effect, which is something happening across the state and disproportionately affecting low-income communities, it would also beautify our neighborhoods and enable us to plant desert-resilient trees that are less water-intensive. For asthmatics like me, this bill is critical. This is a fantastic opportunity to create green spaces across our communities that desperately need them. Please support this bill.

**Peter Gower, Nevada Strategy Director, Energy, Infrastructure and Land Use, The Nature Conservancy:**

The Nature Conservancy supports A.B. 131 to create an urban and community forestry program within the Division of Forestry. Urban tree canopy has multiple cobenefits including urban heat mitigation, carbon storage, local air quality enhancement, food desert mitigation, and wildlife habitat. Urban forests are essential for community climate resilience. The proposed bill would strengthen the Division's commitment to maintaining and improving urban forests. It would also prioritize tree canopy-related resources in historically underserved communities and areas that are most vulnerable to extreme heat.

Recent studies, notably the Regional Transportation Commission's Southern Nevada Extreme Heat Vulnerability Analysis found that populations in the Las Vegas Valley with the highest exposure to extreme heat are also the most sensitive and least able to adapt to its effects. Expanding the tree canopy in these areas is a critical step towards alleviating the disproportionate burden that these communities are bearing in an era of climate change.

As a nonprofit conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends, The Nature Conservancy is partnering with the Division of Forestry to develop a tree canopy strategic planning baseline for the Las Vegas Valley. Last week, we convened over 20 stakeholders to gather information about tree canopy research, plans, studies, and implementation projects. This baseline work will help guide a strategic approach to tree canopy research planning and project implementation in southern Nevada,



and address important questions about species types, water use, and ways to maximize the co-benefits.

**Steve Walker, representing Eureka County:**

Ditto.

**Prince Cunanan Saruhan, representing Faith in Action Nevada; and Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada:**

I am a volunteer, but I am also an immigrant. I originally grew up in the Philippines for the first half of my life. I am presently in a very biodiverse piece of land. I grew up in the island of Luzon just outside metro Manila. Growing up in the 1990s, I witnessed what it was like for rapid urbanization and rapid industrialization. The only way to do that is to uproot trees, to uproot plants, and to concretize everything. I did not really understand what the effects of that were like except for when I was growing up. Childhood asthma was normal. Even though I already lived in a tropical paradise, most kids had childhood asthma because of the great smog that we were living under. We did not know that was the cause. Every kid had to go back to the countryside. We already lived in a semirural interface.

Pretty soon, if we let our cities go rampant, without the trees, without the mitigation of building on flood plains and whatnot, we are going to see things disappear. Before we know it, our urban landscapes will look nothing like what our kids grew up in. I am just going to say this: when I was growing up in the 1990s, I used to see fireflies all the time, being very close to water features. I have been back to the Philippines four times since 2012, and now I have to pay to see fireflies because those trees have been uprooted and those fireflies only live in specific trees. It is kind of the same out here even though we live in a more diverse, more austere environment with grasslands and floodplains. Please support A.B. 131 like I do and like my organizations do. Thank you so much for hearing me.

**Chris Mendoza, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

Thanks to the Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition (NEJC) and the Fifth Sun Project, a local Las Vegas organization, I am here to testify in support of A.B. 131, the movement for urban community foresting. Many of our choice neighborhoods in Las Vegas, such as Summerlin, Centennial Hills, Aliante, and others, enjoy the benefits of a robustly maintained landscape and foresting; namely, the cooler environment and nice shady places to relax. As an active member in the local Las Vegas music community and a working production stage hand, I can say that many of my peers live in the dustier neighborhoods like downtown, the arts district, the east side, and the historic west side. From the events that I organize and jobs that I work, I often drive many of my friends and peers who lack the privilege of reliable transportation. What, for me, is a pleasant 15- or 30-minute drive is for many, a trying 2- or 3-hour commute, waiting in oppressive heat for public transportation with little or no relief areas or shade. With the forests planted and maintained by A.B. 131, our vulnerable communities would see beautified neighborhoods and increased quality of life and potential saving of lives. For those reasons, I implore you to support our efforts toward relief in urban communities via awesome vegetation.



**Vice Chair Anderson:**

I am going to go to Las Vegas for those wishing to provide testimony in support of A.B. 131.

**Joanne Leovy, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada**

I am a volunteer with Citizens' Climate Lobby and Nevada Clinicians for Climate Action. As a family physician, I want to highlight again some of the health and health equity benefits of appropriately selected, planted, and maintained urban trees. The hottest areas in the Las Vegas Valley occur in low-income neighborhoods that paradoxically have residents who have more heat exposure, lower access to health care, and more socioeconomic vulnerability. In 2021 extreme heat directly caused 245 Clark County deaths. In addition to death, heat exposure is associated with increased heart events, asthma exacerbation, perinatal effects, depression, concentration difficulty, and reduced worker productivity.

Urban trees can reduce ground-level temperatures by up to 10 degrees. Increased tree canopy has been shown to reduce heat stroke and heat-related mortality. A modeling study of three U.S. cities including Phoenix, Arizona shows that increasing tree cover could avoid 40 percent to 90 percent of the expected mortality increase due to climate-related increased heat. Another study showed that increased tree cover was related to decreased ambulance calls during heat events. In addition to directly reducing heat deaths and heat health impacts, the cooling effects of trees can reduce the catastrophic deaths due to an unanticipated power outage or emergency.

Trees filter small amounts of particulate air pollution which is associated with many serious harmful health effects. Living in an area with more tree cover has been found to correlate with a lower incidence of lung cancer, asthma, and hospitalizations.

**Andrew Sierra, representing Nevada Conservation League:**

By 2050, the typical number of heatwave days in Nevada is projected to increase from 15 to nearly 55 days a year, which would intensify the urban heat island effect that can be found in communities such as the east and north sides of Las Vegas. Las Vegas ranked number one for the biggest difference between urban and rural temperatures, with urban areas being an average of 7.3 degrees hotter. However, researchers have concluded that we can minimize the urban heat island effect by simply planting more trees. Not only would urban forestry mitigate the urban heat island effect, but it would also beautify neighborhoods and plant desert-resilient trees that are less water-intensive. Additionally, trees serve as a natural air purifier helping reduce particulate pollution that leads to health ailments such as asthma.

**Nick Christenson, representing Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club:**

On behalf of the Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club, and our more than 30,000 members and supporters statewide, I am speaking today in support of A.B. 131. Community forestry provides innumerable benefits. I will not rehash all of the ones and the reasons that people have given for why that is the case.

I wish to add some information specifically about how trees reduce pollution levels in our community. The more we learn about the effects of air pollution, the more we understand



just how harmful and insidious it is. Trees are one of the most effective ways to mitigate outdoor air pollution. Our children are one population most impacted by air pollution. This is because of their higher respiratory rates, still-developing bodies, and the fact that they live closer to the ground where heavier pollution particles tend to concentrate and lead to kids increased susceptibility to the air pollution. Being around trees can improve the health of our kids. We recognize that conserving water is a vital concern in our state and trees do require water. This is precisely why creating a new section within the state's existing Division of Forestry that is staffed with professionals who understand what sort of vegetation is appropriate for each community, as this bill does, is the right way to proceed. We believe that there is a balance to be had between tree populations and water consumption, and the proper balance in most of the state is to support more trees selected for each particular biome. The Sierra Club strongly supports A.B. 131. It will help mitigate the effects of pollution and climate change in our state and thus improve the quality of life for our residents. Thank you for your time. [Written testimony was also provided, [Exhibit F](#).]

**Vice Chair Anderson:**

We will come back to Carson City for more testimony in support of A.B. 131.

**Samuel Cano, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a member leader of Make the Road Nevada, and also part of the NEJC. I am here to support A.B. 131. When I step out of my house, I have the privilege to have a park in my community named Lorenzi Park. However, I understand that a lot of people are not offered that same opportunity. My vision for all Nevada is, no matter your ZIP Code or where you come from, you should have the same access to green spaces. Together we can improve our air quality and take a bold step. Today is Nevada's first official Environmental Justice Lobby Day. Soon I am going to return back to Las Vegas, Nevada. After I leave, I hope that the Nevada legislators keep the same energy and fights for the environmental justice along with the green spaces.

**Marina Bahena, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

[Robert Garcia, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada, was the Spanish language translator for Ms. Bahena.] I am a member of Make the Road Nevada and part of the NEJC. I am in support of A.B. 131. Where I live, there is a lot of concrete and there are no plants or trees. Additionally, at the bus stops, there are no trees or benches for sitting. By passing A.B. 131, I will have the opportunity to live happier knowing my community has natural resources like green spaces available. I urge the Committee to move forward with A.B. 131.

**Elizabeth Ortiz, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

[Robert Garcia was the Spanish language translator for Ms. Ortiz.] I am a member leader of Make the Road Nevada and NEJC. I am giving support to A.B. 131. Unfortunately, the green spaces in my community in east Las Vegas are deteriorating and disappearing. The trees along the streets in the beautiful parks with trails are also disappearing. The environment in my community is hotter, drier, and sadder. I take my kids to the park in Henderson because they love to see the green spaces and feel the breeze the trees provide us with. Thank you for listening to my testimony.



**Eztli Amaya, Environmental Justice Organizer, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada:**

I am also the cofounder of Fifth Sun Project here in support of Assembly Bill 131. As a community member, spending half of my life in East Las Vegas, I have had a firsthand experience living in an urban community that lacks access to nutritious foods, safe transportation structures, and heat protection. Underdeveloped and underserved communities have had to endure heat- and pollution-related illnesses due to extreme climates and racial and economic inequalities. In the urban heat island, equity must play a role and remediate environmental effects where there is public transportation, where people live, work, and go to school.

Urban forests slow climate change, mitigate air pollution, and clean our air by holding particles and sequestering carbon dioxide. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that every year trees remove about 800 million tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. That is enough to offset 12 percent of our climate pollution from burning fossil fuels. Planting more trees in sustainable locations builds healthy forest solutions and is possible in urban areas. Urban forests are a great climate solution that delivers environmental, economic, social, and health services. Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada and Fifth Sun Project support this bill because of the goal in reducing the urban heat islands, food deserts, hot playgrounds, hot streets, and its effects that fall disproportionately on people of color in low-income areas. We encourage the members of this Committee to stand with underserved communities and support Assembly Bill 131.

**Jaaziel Ozuna, Private Citizen, Sparks, Nevada:**

I am here in support of A.B. 131. I live in Sparks, but I grew up in Las Vegas. I am sure we are all familiar about how unbearable the summers can be there. Two summers ago as I was getting onto the U.S. 95 freeway on East Charleston, I witnessed a houseless man who sought shade under a tree by the freeway wall. A police car was driving on gravel to tell him to move. This was on the east side which I want to ditto what everyone just said. This is where you do not see a lot of greeneries. It is a food desert that affects mostly people of color, where folks do not have access to fresh produce like they do in Summerlin. Where can people who are unhoused or walking to the bus in the height of the summer find relief? People are dying in our state because of the heat. Houseless people are living in underground tunnels meant for flash floods to escape that heat. When it rains, they have no way of getting out. Just like we need to find a solution for houseless people in Reno, I am urging you to take action and support this bill to invest in the underserved communities, to make every corner of Nevada, from Las Vegas to Winnemucca, a place where people can find refuge in the shade.

**Aaron Harris, Private Citizen, Henderson, Nevada:**

I am here to testify in strong support of Assembly Bill 131 in order to ensure that everyone has the same quality of life that I had growing up, growing up where trees were an essential component of our day-to-day life. They were used as a safe place in games of tag. We climbed the trees for fun. We built tree houses. Trees really are essential to a child's mental health development. Every dollar that we spend on trees is a dollar that we are putting



towards educational outcomes. It is not just about the health effects, but we are also going to see educational improvements and health improvements.

The National Institutes of Health released a study that said that children who live within a quarter mile of a park have lower rates of childhood obesity. I can tell you that even in Henderson, where I live, very few homes live within a quarter mile of a park. Having trees, not just in these specific places, but throughout our neighborhoods, is critical to ensuring that we have proper biodiversity, proper health outcomes, and ensuring that kids can continue to play outside in the street as they like to do, not just in the winter but in the summer as well.

**Angel Lazcano, Organizer, Somos Votantes:**

Somos Votantes is a Latino-lead, Latino-focused organization dedicated to empowering the next generation of Latinos by ensuring our community has the tools and information they need to fully participate in our democracy. First of all, I would like to thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of A.B. 131. Creating an urban and community forestry program will help tackle one of the biggest problems affecting working families across Nevada: our rising heat. Latinos are in the heart of the issue as our communities are more often than not located in urban heat islands such as Sunrise Manor. More trees not only stand as a solution to the heat problem, but come with a myriad of health benefits for hard working families, as you have heard today. By passing this piece of legislation, we tackle the issue by providing a means to better identify areas in need of tree canopies, maintain them, and improve them. I hope you take our support into consideration. Let us create greener healthy communities for hard working families in Nevada

**James Katzen, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a member of the Sierra Club and a lot of other environmental organizations which I will not go into right now. I am in concurrence with much of the positive statements that have been said about carbon capture by trees and other things; I will not go into all that. I do want to point out that we have a long history of environmental protection in this country. The most prominent parts would begin with Franklin Roosevelt and the war overshadowing most of his remembrance. He started out in 1933 when he became president, and in his specially built Ford, drove thousands of miles to examine territory all the way from the east coast to the California coast and created a lot of the parks and preserves that we have today. We need to carry on that tradition. Mr. Roosevelt's work was done in a lot of ways because it was healthy, with the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration, and other organizations. These organizations put people to work creating the beautification areas. I believe Eleanor Roosevelt was the woman who did the beautification of Washington and Pennsylvania Avenue and the reclamation of the Potomac. Thank you.

**Vice Chair Anderson:**

I am going to go to the phones now for anyone wishing to testify in support of A.B. 131.

**Dora Martinez, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:**

As disabled people, we love happy bills and we certainly hope that you all will help us. This will tickle you happy. At the peak of COVID-19, people with disabilities were unable to



travel independently due to lack of transportation. We were going outside and trying to find shade. As you may or may not know, a person who is blind cannot drive. We take a lot of buses and there are hardly any trees, and we have to mind our service dogs and ourselves. I certainly hope you will pass this bill.

**Vice Chair Anderson:**

Now we will move on to opposition. Is there anyone wishing to provide testimony in opposition in Carson City, Las Vegas, or Elko? Seeing no one, is there anyone on the phone? Hearing no one, is there anyone in neutral in Carson City?

**Kacey KC, State Forester Firewarden, Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:**

I am here to testify in neutral on A.B. 131. This particular bill will codify the Urban and Community Forestry Program for the Division for all the reasons you heard about earlier. One of the big aspects of this is coordinating multiple partners and stakeholders, such as municipalities, academic institutions, nonprofit, and industry, making sure that everybody knows the best available science that is out there and that we are implementing across our developed and our urban areas the same. The roles that trees play are critically important to our ecosystems and to our communities.

This is a very important program to us as a Division. One of the reasons this is different than the current program is that we are funded by the federal government through state and private forestry program from the U.S. Forest Service funding. There are restrictions on that funding.

Historically, urban and community forestry has taken a big hit in federal funding because of the wildfire crisis. As we started to see the wildfire crisis peak, our urban and community forestry budget dropped significantly. We have managed the program with one full-time coordinator currently housed in Las Vegas—historically housed up here—and one part-time urban and community forester in Elko. We are going to expand to three full-time employees, one per region. This would allow us to bring a different Nevada flair beyond what the federal guidelines and rules and regulations are. One of the most important things is consistent messaging; using the best available science; and making sure that we are educating tree care workers, people planting trees, people taking care of trees, both in English and in Spanish. We also translate to other languages as well. It is very important that we are helping to find that education. Unfortunately, it is not as easy as just saying, we plant trees and they grow. Trees require a lot of work. They need to be pruned, they need to be loved, they do not always need to be hugged, but it helps. There are a lot of things that need to happen. We need to ensure that everybody in the industry is making sure that those trees are properly taken care of. That is the job of the Division of Forestry, coordinating those efforts across jurisdictions.

**Vice Chair Anderson:**

Is there anyone else wishing to provide testimony in neutral in Carson City, Las Vegas, or Elko? Seeing no one, is there anyone on the phone? Hearing no one, and the sponsor has



waived on closing remarks, I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 131. [Also received but not discussed were Exhibit G, Exhibit H, and Exhibit I. Assemblywoman Cohen reassumed the Chair.]

**Chair Cohen:**

I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 71.

**Assembly Bill 71: Requires the Division of Environmental Protection of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to conduct an interim study concerning environmental justice. (BDR S-347)**

**Assemblyman Howard Watts, Assembly District No. 15:**

It is my pleasure today to present Assembly Bill 71 for your consideration. Assembly Bill 71 was recommended by the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources with bipartisan support. I was the chair of that committee during the interim. The bill aims to address a gap that we have seen in looking at environmental impacts, particularly within the state. It seeks to look at environmental justice. As I walk through the bill, it is important to note that we have got a strong foundation of environmental evaluation and regulation. We have public health regulation and processes. We have also analyzed some of the impacts that different communities face and have tried to map some of those things. Ultimately, many of them are fairly siloed. Assembly Bill 71 looks to take a more holistic and comprehensive look at some of these issues and how they stack together and amplify one another. Then, based on that and based on engagement with the community, come back with some ideas that this body, the Executive Branch, or others could consider to help address some of the disparate impacts that certain communities have seen.

I will walk you through the bill so that everyone is clear on that and then give some examples on why I think this is necessary. Section 2 defines "cumulative environmental burden." This is really important because it is defining how some of these different impacts related to the environment stack up for different communities. Section 4 provides some examples of what environmental burdens could include. Section 5 creates a definition of "environmental justice" in statute, basically a fair and equitable treatment of different communities. Section 7 includes an existing definition of "historically underserved community." Section 8 defines "meaningful involvement" for communities throughout this study process.

Section 9 is the heart of the bill. It would direct the Division of Environmental Protection to conduct a study on environmental justice issues. The Division would have to identify communities that face the greatest cumulative impacts, come up with methods to prevent an increase in those cumulative impacts, and come up with strategies to decrease any existing cumulative impacts. It would prioritize historically underserved communities and, crucially, it would allow the Division to contract with a private entity to conduct the study. This section also designates who should be involved in that process, which is also the subject of a conceptual amendment [Exhibit J]. With the amendment, we are breaking it out into its own section, requiring collaboration and coordination with different agencies, affected communities, the public as a whole, and other stakeholders. It specifically calls out agencies



involved in air quality, environmental protection, public health, natural resources, transportation, research institutions, representatives from environmental organizations, representatives from the business community, and representatives from community organizations including indigent or low-income populations and other underserved communities. One thing that I did omit but would like to add is the engagement of tribal governments in this process as well.

In practice, we just heard, for example, about tree canopy and the disparities that we see in that. Also related to that, we heard about the urban heat island effect. There has also been some work to look at air pollution. The Division of Environmental Protection already knows its permitted entities for air or water pollution discharges. They look at each of those projects essentially on a fence-line basis and look at it within the limits of what is acceptable within the existing regulatory framework for that facility to release. Think about having a grouping of those facilities all in one community with a highway running next to it that has a lot of automobile traffic emitting additional pollution. This is trying to look at how those different things that are often looked at on an individual basis all come together to add up to the impacts that the community faces.

Another issue is looking at the public health side of things. We know some health conditions are more prevalent in certain communities, for example, asthma. How is the prevalence of air pollution potentially making that worse or making the impacts, such as hospitalization, worse for those communities? Another issue, heat, factors into all of that as well. Heat is actually a factor in the development of ozone pollution. Again, that is something that interacts along with air pollution and health impacts. The Environmental Protection Agency has created certain environmental justice mapping tools, but again, we do not have anything that is truly specific to the state and tries to gather all of these different data.

The other piece I did not mention before is economics, areas where folks are struggling to pay their utility bills. The impacts of heat on those communities are going to be different than elsewhere. Also their access to use, for example heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning technology to filter the indoor air, is an issue. Assembly Bill 71 looks to step back and look at these issues at a higher level. I would envision the Division contracting with an agency to help look at these different issues, to hear from the community and all the different stakeholders, and to produce a report that can help inform future action by the state in addressing them. With that, I am glad to answer any questions that members of the Committee may have.

**Assemblywoman Brown-May:**

Thank you for the really good work throughout the interim on this bill. I do have two questions. Section 4 defines "environmental burden" as any significant impact, and subsection 2 delineates air and water pollution. Is there any conversation relative to indoor air and water pollution as opposed to outdoor, and how does that interplay?



**Assemblyman Watts:**

Indoor air pollution is a very quickly emerging area of interest. We have done a lot of work on regulating and trying to address outdoor air pollution, especially when it is related to industrial releases. There is a growing body of research that shows that combustion of fossil fuels indoors, for example, can create extremely high levels of indoor air pollution. Cooking in general can actually create very high levels of indoor air pollution, at least temporarily, if you do not have access to the appropriate ventilation. This bill does not specify indoor or outdoor. I think there is a significant amount of data available on outdoor pollution, but I would hope that at least the consideration of indoor air pollution would be one of the topics for consideration as part of the study.

**Assemblywoman Brown-May:**

Section 8, subsection 3 states, "The state agency seeks out and facilitates the involvement of any persons potentially affected . . . ." Was there any methodology that was discussed in the creation of that?

**Assemblyman Watts:**

One of the critical things here is that in some of these communities—they can be urban communities, rural communities, or tribal communities—oftentimes, folks feel like they are dealing with all of these things stacking on top of each other. They feel like they have been left out of the process. It is a struggle that we have. In general, when we are taking different actions, we try and publicly post things and put them out there. That does not always guarantee that someone is going to be aware of it and be able to participate in the process. We are trying to encourage folks to be thoughtful and deliberate in finding new ways to reach out. It is not extremely prescriptive on what that would be. This is an attempt without getting down into the nitty gritty of saying that somebody has to go knock on everyone's door or send everyone a piece of mail. To say that we are doing this, and then say that no one commented so we are going to move forward, is not enough. People need to be very intentional: if we are not hearing from this community, then that is a problem, and we have to find a way to address this in order to do this work.

**Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch:**

I agree that we need to look at this holistically and look at these burdens that are being placed on a whole community. My question has to do with the report and what will be done with all of this. The last thing that we want is another study that goes onto the shelf and then goes nowhere. I think that if we are going to look at this, we need to then have action to improve the things that we discover. Could you speak to the action portion of this?

**Assemblyman Watts:**

There are several other states that have brought forward policy on environmental justice. Several of those, as their action portion, have sought to do some of this mapping to define some of those communities and put additional restrictions on, for example, air and water discharge permits in those communities. The reason that I did not choose to go that route is because we actually have not undertaken this work. I do not want to use income data, racial data, or ethnicity data as a stand-in for truly trying to dig into what some of these impacts are



and how some of those stack and impact the health and well-being of certain communities. I felt that the better approach was to start by better understanding what the issue is and how that might vary across different communities in our state. As part of this process, as we are engaging to understand that, we also should draw on some ideas for how we can address that.

In some areas, maybe changes in transportation, in transit, and deploying trees, maybe that is something that helps address heat and air pollution. In another community, the solutions might look different. Instead of taking a shot in the dark at what the solution is going to be, the idea is to better understand the issues that different communities face and how certain interventions might have a bigger impact in some communities than in others, and get those recommendations back. Some of those might be action by local government, some of them might be action by the Legislature, and some of them could be action by the Executive Branch agencies. That is what the thinking is around this. I did want to make sure that there are recommendations for action to be considered coming out of this. It is not just understanding the program, but that there is a component of looking at ways that we do something about it.

**Assemblyman DeLong:**

In our more urban areas of the state, we have a pretty robust land-use planning process at the local level. In the rural part of the state, most of it is controlled by the federal government, either the Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management. If they are permitting any projects, they go through a rather extensive environmental review process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). How are you seeing the Division incorporating those programs and systems into their report?

**Assemblyman Watts:**

That is one of the reasons why this bill does not look to necessarily modify any of the existing permitting processes that are in place. The NEPA is how environmental review for projects are done at the federal level. The National Environmental Policy Act is fairly robust, and this is not proposing to create a state-level NEPA. This is not proposing to modify the existing permitting processes and authority that, for example, the Division of Environmental Protection has. Oftentimes, NEPA will look a little bit more broadly in scope and in some of the engagement that happens in that process. There are stakeholders that will try and encourage NEPA to look at broader impacts that could be associated with the project. But at the end of the day, that approach is very project-by-project specific. The goal of this is to say, let us look beyond what the impact of any single project or facility is and look at the community level at what some of their vulnerabilities might be and where they might have a combination of exposure to heat, air quality discharge happening nearby, nonpoint source pollution in the waterway, and how those things might be adding up to create an impaired quality of life.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

Section 4 states, "'Environmental burden' means any significant impact . . . ." Section 4, subsection 12 states, "Limited access to health care and higher rates of complicating health conditions." I represent a lot of the rural districts, and there already is a problem with health



care and access to health care. I am trying to understand how a project, a commercial operation of policy would impact health care. Why is that in there with the other list that you have?

**Assemblyman Watts:**

I alluded to the reason it is included a little bit earlier. If, for example, there are issues identified with air pollution, the goal of this is to also understand, if there are higher rates of lung disease that may be linked. Is the pollution a cause or does that make folks more susceptible to any impacts from air pollution? Another example could be extreme heat, which has impacts on all kinds of different bodily systems. If you are dealing with other cardiovascular conditions, you could be even more susceptible to impacts from heat. The goal is to combine a public health perspective into some of the environmental factors. Just to be clear, this is the data-gathering phase. It is not to require that a project look at this issue or a proposed development. This is about trying to work with the contractor to do a scan of the state and see where some of these different items that have been listed are stacking up and potentially negatively impacting the quality of life of a community.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

As I look at the bill on the macro level, a lot of this just makes sense in the sense that, yes, we all want clean air, we want clean water, and we want good conditions. It is on the micro level that I think some of these things are taken care of already through environmental protection. It leaves me wondering how this even looks. I know it is a study, but what does the study become? Does it then become a mandate that the study said this, so we mandate these micro things into existence, some of which are already being done? Help me understand what goes on after the study.

**Assemblyman Watts:**

Part of this is to bring recommendations to the extent that those recommendations go before any decision-making body, whether it is a local government, the state Legislature, or an Executive Branch agency. It will be up to them to decide what they do or do not want to move forward with. We cannot bind any future government action. The goal of this is to inform and to provide ideas for consideration. At the end of the day, it is not saying to change any existing permitting process. It is recognizing that we often do look at a lot of these things in silos. We look at heat, we look at air pollution, we look at things on a project-by-project basis, and we are not necessarily looking at it on a bigger scale. I think that is a worthwhile exercise, this definition of cumulative environmental burdens. When we are looking at things one piece at a time and at no point are looking at what the impact is on an entire neighborhood of decisions made over a period of years and many projects, I think it is a little bit of a blind spot for us.

**Chair Cohen:**

Before I saw the conceptual amendment [[Exhibit J](#)], I have notes to myself about section 9 and whether there should be a sociologist, an economist, or certain types of scientists. I really appreciated that in the conceptual amendment you listed the research institutions, in addition to the representatives from environmental organizations, the business community,



et cetera. I would ask that maybe there be something more specific in considering a sociologist, an economist, or someone else who specifically knows how to gather data and get people to come out of their homes to answer questions and to participate in a study. If we are able to bring those people on board so that this is a real detailed study, that is a sign that the study is data-driven and has the real information that will help us as we proceed with the data that we hope we can obtain from this.

**Assemblyman Watts:**

The contractor who is chosen for the study could also play a significant role in that outreach. One thing that also addresses Assemblywoman Hansen's question a bit is, the Division has looked at some other areas that have conducted some similar studies. I believe they will provide some testimony in the neutral position. They might be able to provide some additional clarity about what is involved in that and how it differs from some of the things that they currently do. I do agree that that we need to make sure that we are really thinking about the sociological aspects and doing the outreach.

**Chair Cohen:**

Seeing no more questions, I will move on to support.

**Patrick Donnelly, Nevada State Director, Center for Biological Diversity:**

I am thrilled to be a part of the Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition on the first Environmental Justice Lobby Day. I will not take up your time because you want to hear from community members. We are thrilled to support A.B. 71, and we thank Assemblyman Watts for his leadership on this issue.

**Juan Lizarraga, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

Thank you for being the protectors and the guardians of this state. I am a fellow resident as well. I am a worker, and I am a father. Now that I am a father, I am in charge of my daughter, eight years old, and I give her a lesson to always learn from her mistakes. This is a bittersweet memory for me because when I was eight, I got to hear this lesson from my grandpa as he gasped for air, as he choked in every sentence from pulmonary-related illnesses that were produced due to the environmental toxicity of mine-work-related environment explosions that were in his area. These destroyed his quality of life, put him to bed, and then put him in the ground way before he could even meet his granddaughter. Now the only thing I can do here is look up to you again as guardians and protectors of Nevada. Please keep supporting the protection of this beautiful state by supporting A.B. 71. This actually is a study that will help identify which communities in the state face the greatest environmental burdens such as the communities around Thacker Pass. Thank you for your time.

**Laekyn Kelley, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am here to support A.B. 71. I want to briefly speak from my experience why I am in strong favor of this bill. I grew up in Las Vegas. From kindergarten to my bachelor's in environmental science and now earning my master's in communication, I have spent nearly 25 years in Las Vegas. I was also recently diagnosed with an autoimmune thyroid disease at



25 years old with no known cause. We all know about drought and heat issues in southern Nevada, but what I did not realize, unfortunately, until recently is the disproportionate heat, air pollution, and other exposures near my home in downtown where I live and my sister owns a home. I think a lack of studies has led to this gap in awareness and certain members of the community, such as myself and those in east Las Vegas, are facing a relatively unknown extent of health impacts because of it. It is incredibly important that we get more comprehensive data about these disproportionate effects. I have studied these issues in my education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I can confidently say that this study will offer important data to intelligently plan for the future of my neighborhood and could be beneficial to future academic studies as well.

**Martha Moreno, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

[Robert Garcia, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada, was the Spanish language translator for Ms. Moreno.] I am a member of Make the Road Nevada, a member leader, and part of the Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition. I am here in support of A.B. 71. I support this bill because I live near a freeway, and the pollution from vehicle smog increases during the peak time of day. I am worried for the safety of our children and for our neighborhoods in general since trees have been replaced with rocks in my area.

**Kyle Roerink, Executive Director, Great Basin Water Network:**

We represent urban and rural constituencies around the state regarding groundwater issues. I think section 4 of the bill is really important and that we take the time to consider what the groundwater impacts are going to be across the state in the future. Again, we support A.B. 71. We thank you all for your time and we thank Assemblyman Watts for his work.

**John Hadder, Director, Great Basin Resource Watch:**

We also thank Assemblyman Watts for bringing forward this bill. Great Basin Resource Watch works with many communities that are disproportionately affected by projects in the Great Basin, particularly mining operation, which is our focus. We are glad to see this legislation to begin to understand and provide recommendations to improve government operations, decision-making, and addressing environmental justice. The key obviously is communities disproportionately affected. That is what we want to try to get at: who is continuously affected by some of the projects and operations and understanding that. Again, we fully support this bill. [A letter was also provided, [Exhibit K](#).]

**Peter Gower, Nevada Strategy Director, Energy, Infrastructure and Land Use, The Nature Conservancy:**

The Nature Conservancy supports A.B. 71. As a global organization committed to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends, we believe that to be effective in helping the environment, we must implement solutions that are inclusive, just, and equitable. We are glad to see the bill consider the environmental burdens of climate and energy, in particular. We think it is important to consider the impact that increased development of energy infrastructure has on Nevada's cities, tribes, and rural communities. In addition to transmission lines and renewable energy development, we are likely to see more infrastructure built to support critical mineral supply and manufacturing. These industries



have a natural resource input, output, and supply chain considerations that should be considered, and associated environmental justice burdens as we build out that infrastructure. I also want to say that we appreciate the other topics listed as environmental burdens, notably reduction in groundwater levels. Nevada is the driest state in the nation, and we are fortunate to have many groundwater aquifers that provide a buffer for droughts and climate change, as well as groundwater dependent ecosystems that support many of the over 300 endemic species found only in Nevada. However, almost half of Nevada's groundwater basins have more water committed than is available, and 20 percent are overpumped, which threatens water availability for people and nature.

**Winona Freed, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I came here with my nine-year-old daughter, but she is bored at this point and did not want to participate in this. I am going to speak her part and my part. Over a year and a half ago, she knew something was really wrong with the environment that made her scared. She did not know the science about how it worked, but she knew it was hurting people and her childhood. My daughter and I watched the documentary "I Am Greta," and my daughter was devastated to learn about climate change. After watching, we were inspired to turn our climate anxiety into climate action and start Fridays for Future Las Vegas and Fridays for Future Kids. She should not be here; she should be at school today. Instead, she is here lobbying for her future because after finding out the truth, how can she not?

Summers are getting hotter and longer. According to *Scientific American*, as record-breaking heat happens more often, the number of heat-related illnesses go up. Every year, more than 9,000 high school athletes are treated for heat-related illness. A nationwide study found that from May to September, days with higher temps, there are more visits to children's hospitals. When it is unbearable, it is really hard for kids. My daughter hates being stuck inside. She wants to get fresh air and run around. She feels like she is getting cabin fever all summer long, waiting for it to get cool. It is obvious that climate change affects kids' mental health, and it is not hard to see how going through these heat events make it hard. For children to have to bunker down from tornadoes or hurricanes or have to flee from homes due to wildfires, it creates fear and anxiety.

When the air pollution is bad when she is walking home from school, she can hear crunching in her teeth because the air pollution is so thick. She has to wear a mask to school because of that. She cannot go outside and play. She has to stay inside. Las Vegas is eleventh place for the most polluted city for ozone pollution in the nation. While it is tough for her to have to deal with being inside, it is more than that. A Fridays for Future term is "most affected people in areas" (MAPA). This will affect everyone. This whole bill identifies who is MAPA. We do not entirely know everything about who is MAPA, we do not have enough studies. Children are getting hurt from this. We need to be able to help them. They are neurologically getting hurt. They should have a fight for their future and we need to figure out what needs to be in place.



**Teresa Melendez, representing Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe:**

I am here to give testimony on behalf of A.B. 71. I would like to acknowledge this Committee and the activists in the room. It is rare to sit in front of a government body and to be recognized as tribal nations. To hear tribes consistently be recognized in this space in this room has been really uplifting, and I appreciate that. I think it is because of a common bond that people in this room and tribal nations share. When people think of natives, they often romanticize about this connection to the earth. The reality is that the Indigenous people of this land, the Paiute, the Shoshone, and the Washoe people have always been here. Their bones and their blood are in this dirt and in these mountains. We talk about our ceremonies; the power comes from the mountains, from the stars, from these lands, these lakes, and rivers. Everything about these people is connected to this land. I think that the people who love the environment really recognize that relationship the tribes have with this place.

I am Indigenous also, but from Michigan. These are not my homelands; my homelands come from Michigan and from Poland. All of us are Indigenous to somewhere. I think that our blood memory, our DNA resonates and loves that place where our ancestors come from. Today, I am speaking in support of this bill for one of the tribes that we represent, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, knowing that the Nevada tribes disproportionately experience environmental hazards unlike other communities. I am excited to see an environmental study that will prove that. Oftentimes, we are told that our numbers are insignificant, that this tribe is too small. In essence, we need this data to be able to prove to the state of Nevada and the federal government the environmental harm that is being caused by industry around our tribal communities with that.

**Olivia Tanager, Program Manager, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada:**

The Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLAN) is a member group of the Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition. I am here to testify in support of A.B. 71. The PLAN was founded in 1994 by Nevada activists to build a more fair and just Nevada that puts people and plants first. We recognize that there are still serious roadblocks to achieving that in Nevada. The first step to dismantling them is knowing what to dismantle and how to dismantle it. Communities across Nevada experience environmental issues differently. A study as to how those issues impact different people is long overdue. From PLAN's history of working with directly impacted communities, we know native communities experience disproportionate amounts of water pollution from mining. The east side of Las Vegas, which is a predominantly nonwhite community, is known to be sometimes as much as 17 degrees warmer than white and wealthier areas. Farmworkers, 75 percent of whom are members of the Latino community, have to work in increasingly harsh conditions through smoke and extreme heat. Areas of high pollution like highways tend to run through areas that are lower income. This study is a major step forward in achieving environmental justice in Nevada by identifying symptoms of environmental injustices and pointing towards solutions. I ask you, on behalf of environmental justice advocates in this room who are here for the first ever Environmental Justice Lobby Day, on behalf of PLAN, and on behalf of myself as a Nevadan, to support Assembly Bill 71.



**Christi Cabrera-Georgeson, Deputy Director, Nevada Conservation League:**

I am here in support of A.B. 71. As we move to a cleaner, healthier state, we must make sure that we are not leaving anyone behind. This bill will help us make more informed decisions in the future to make sure that we are doing just that.

**Cynthia Moore, Coalition Coordinator, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition:**

We are here today for our very first Environmental Justice Day at the Legislature. The Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition (NEJC) is a coalition of 14 Nevada-based organizations united in the fight for intersectional climate action and environmental justice. Through grassroots organizing and policy advocacy, the NEJC is working to prioritize justice and the fight to protect our state's natural resources through a social and racial equity lens to ensure a just transition away from extractive industries and liberate frontline communities from environmental hardships.

We are here in support of A.B. 71. In Nevada not everyone experiences the same environmental issues. Communities such as east Las Vegas and the historical west side tend to have higher rates of pollution. Many of our communities are built closer to freeways, and our areas are experiencing heavy traffic. If you were to look at a map of air quality in Las Vegas on any given day, you will see that for communities that are in the core of the city, which also tend to be located in the urban heat island, the air quality index is much higher. I often use this app on my phone to determine whether or not my son, who is only five years old, will be able to play outside due to his respiratory issues that are exacerbated by poor air quality days. That is not how I grew up. When I was growing up in Las Vegas, that was not an issue. My son is only five years old and already his childhood is looking a lot different than mine.

Conducting an environmental study in our state is something that needs to be done in order to determine which communities are impacted the most by environmental issues, and for the state to come up with solutions, and how we need to address these issues. The environmental justice study would help communities like east Las Vegas and all other communities in our state to address these issues that we are all experiencing on a daily basis. I urge you to support A.B. 71.

**Lisa Ortega, Executive Director, Nevada Plants**

I am testifying in favor of A.B. 71. I do think a city like this will help folks like me, boots on the ground, know how to be effective and find the best places to be effective as we look at the whole. Thank you very much and ditto, ditto.

**Chair Cohen:**

We will go to Las Vegas to hear more support.

**Nick Christenson, representing Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club:**

Speaking on behalf of our members and supporters in the state, we are asking you to support A.B. 71. It is well-known that low-income residents and people of color suffer the harmful effects of pollution more than any other group. My written testimony has this documented,



and Assemblyman Watts has laid this out very well. I will refer you to the written testimony if you want to read that in detail [[Exhibit L](#)]. It is past time for the state of Nevada to recognize that addressing these environmental injustices not only helps those in the communities who suffer most, but also takes a much-needed step in figuring out the best ways to mitigate climate change. We should encourage this opportunity for all citizens of the state to be able to enjoy a clean environment as well as economic prosperity. Assembly Bill 71 would be a positive first step in that direction. For these reasons, we urge you to support A.B. 71. Thank you for your time.

**Chair Cohen:**

Seeing no further testimony in support in Carson City, Las Vegas, or Elko, are there any callers wishing to testify in support?

**James Phoenix, Chairman, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe:**

I am a retired Reno police officer and Lieutenant Colonel in the Nevada Army National Guard. I support A.B. 71. Why? To bring awareness, documentation, and recommendations of the Native American communities here in the Great Basin that suffer from environmental burdens such as groundwater and surface water management and grid infrastructure power outages. Pyramid Lake is just one of the 28 tribes here in the Great Basin reservation communities that do not have the experts or the resources to study and reduce the environmental burdens. This is a great opportunity to study tribes and the impacts we suffer. Developing methods and strategies to prevent increases and to decrease cumulative environmental burdens on these Native American-identified communities and submit the report of its findings and recommendations to the Director of Legislative Counsel is something all Native American communities will support. Therefore, please take the time and commitment to our Native American people here in the Great Basin so that it does not go unnoticed and become less of a priority. In closing, I want to thank all Committee members, and I support A.B. 71 as proposed by Assemblyman Watts. Thank you.

**Maria-Teresa Liebermann-Parraga, Deputy Director, Battle Born Progress:**

I want to say ditto to what all of the folks have said, from Battle Born Progress and myself, as an individual having grown up in a heavily Latino community. I grew up with pollution and a lack of green spaces, which is why I support this bill. Hopefully we can make our state a better place. Thank you.

**Stacey Montooth, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:**

I am a citizen of the Walker River Paiute Nation. I am calling to thank Assemblyman Watts for his leadership and to record as a supporter of A.B. 71.

**Chair Cohen:**

Hearing no more testimony in support, I will move on to opposition.

**Steve Walker, representing Eureka County:**

[Inaudible] outline what "environmental burden" means. For example, section 4 uses many subjective and undefined terms in the statement, "destruction, damage or impairment of



natural resources resulting from intentional or reasonably foreseeable causes." Eureka County's current social economic structure is heavily reliant on mining. Mining by its nature intentionally removes valuable ore bodies which some would define as destructive or damage. Some could interpret mining as always being an environmental burden, even in cases where it is not. The current statement in section 4 could be replaced with "unnecessary or undue degradation" to comport to the federal legal and regulatory standards. Another example in section 4, subsection 6, is "reduction of groundwater levels." Any groundwater use whatsoever including domestic wells will reduce groundwater levels to some degree. This language should be consistent with reasonable lowering of the water table currently allowed in *Nevada Revised Statutes* Chapter 534. Eureka County has some suggestions for changes and we make ourselves available to work with the sponsors and others to find the language we can get behind. We will also provide an amendment to send to Assemblyman Watts.

**Chair Cohen:**

Is there anyone else in opposition in Carson City, Las Vegas, or Elko? Seeing no one, is there anyone on the phone? Hearing no one, we will go to those wishing to provide testimony in neutral.

**Jennifer Carr, P.E., Deputy Administrator, Administrative Services and Water Programs, Division of Environmental Protection, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:**

Estimating and assessing cumulative environmental burdens and impacts is a focus area for research by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Research and Development and is a fairly new area that we had to look into when we got the initial bill draft request for this effort. We did reach out to a few communities in the U.S. that are working in this area. Specifically, we did receive information back from the city of Chicago as well as the state of Virginia. Frankly, there are not a lot of folks doing this yet. We will look forward to seeing how this bill progresses. I am happy to answer any questions that you might send my way. I might have to come back with answers at a later time. I am appreciative of hearing the testimony here today because it is revealing areas to me that I do not necessarily think about on a day-to-day basis. Thank you for the opportunity to hear what everyone has had to say today.

**Chair Cohen:**

We do have a question for you.

**Assemblyman DeLong:**

Who would you see managing this project within the Division? Specifically, which bureau or would it be at the Division's administrative level or in the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources?



**Jennifer Carr:**

This effort would cross all of our media: air, land, and water. It is probably too soon to tell, but we certainly would be handling it, as contemplated by Assemblyman Watts, with a contractor. We simply do not have the resources to conduct this at this time.

**Chair Cohen:**

Is there anyone else in neutral in Carson City, Las Vegas, or Elko? Seeing no one, is there anyone on the phone? Hearing no one, and we have no closing statements, I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 71. [Also provided but not discussed is [Exhibit M](#).] Is there anyone wishing to provide public comment? [There was no one.] We will meet back here on Wednesday, March 8, 2023. We are adjourned [at 6:14 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Nancy Davis  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## **EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Nevada Shared Stewardship and the Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy," presented by Mary Farnsworth, Regional Forester, Intermountain Region, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Kacey KC, State Forester Firewarden, Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

[Exhibit D](#) is a fact sheet titled "Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest," submitted by Bill Dunkelberger, Forest Supervisor, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

[Exhibit E](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "AB131, Urban and Community Forestry. (a call for remediation)," presented by Lisa Ortega, Executive Director, Nevada Plants.

[Exhibit F](#) is a letter dated March 6, 2023, submitted by Nick Christenson, representing Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club, in support of [Assembly Bill 131](#).

[Exhibit G](#) is a letter dated February 26, 2023, submitted by Joe Noriega, President, Southern Nevada Arborist Group, in support of [Assembly Bill 131](#).

[Exhibit H](#) is a letter dated March 5, 2023, submitted by Matt Brezina, Parks Manager, City of Reno, in support of [Assembly Bill 131](#).

[Exhibit I](#) is a copy of an email dated March 5, 2023, submitted by Rita Ransom, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada in support of [Assembly Bill 131](#).

[Exhibit J](#) is a proposed conceptual amendment to [Assembly Bill 71](#), submitted by Assemblyman Howard Watts, Assembly District No. 15.

[Exhibit K](#) is a letter dated March 6, 2023, submitted by John Hadder, Director, Great Basin Resource Watch, in support of [Assembly Bill 71](#).

[Exhibit L](#) is written testimony dated March 6, 2023, submitted by Nick Christenson, representing Toiyabe Chapter, Sierra Club, in support of [Assembly Bill 71](#).

[Exhibit M](#) is a copy of an email dated March 7, 2023, submitted by Tony Ramirez, Government Affairs Manager, Make the Road Nevada, in support of [Assembly Bill 71](#).