MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Eighty-third Session
May 15, 2025

The Senate Committee on Finance was called to order by Chair Marilyn Dondero Loop at 8:22 a.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2025, in Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 6 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada. Exhibit A is the agenda. Exhibit B is the attendance roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau. Link to Executive Budget. Link to Budget Amendments.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen, Vice Chair
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro
Senator Dina Neal
Senator Angela D. Taylor
Senator Carrie Ann Buck
Senator Robin L. Titus
Senator Jeff Stone

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Roberta Lange, Senatorial District No. 7

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Cathy Crocket, Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst
Marie Bell, Committee Staff Manager
Bepsy Strasburg, Committee Secretary
Virginia Weitzel, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Christine Hull, Executive Director, Nevada Center for Civic Engagement

Amelia Thibault, Director, Division Compliance, Nevada Department of Education
Susan Keema, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Nadine Kienhoefer, Legislative Analyst, Ferrari Reader; Nevada's Credit Unions
Trevor Parrish, Vegas Chamber
Tom Clark, Nevada Association of School Boards; Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce
Cynthia Perine
Ann Jensen, Innovations Officer, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services
Sabrina Schnur, Government Affairs Associate, Nevada Psychiatric Association
Alejandro Rodriguez, Nevada System of Higher Education
Sheila Bray, University of Nevada, Reno
Amanda Hughes, Education Programs Professional, Nevada Department of Education
Brad Keating, Clark County School District
Cyrus Hojjaty
Saju Joseph
Michael Hillerby, Nevada State Board of Nursing
Lucas Foletta, Nevada State Board of Optometry
Adam Plain, Insurance Regulation Liaison, Division of Insurance, Nevada Department of Business and Industry
Kirsten Stasio, CEO, Nevada Clean Energy Fund
Kanani Espinoza, Senior Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Nevada Hand
Andrea Martinez, Chair, Nevada Clean Energy Funds Tribal Advisory Board
Wendy Colborne, Chief of Staff, Building and Construction Trades Council of Northern Nevada
Alex Tanchek, Silver State Government Relations; Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe; Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe; Vitality Unlimited; Stericycle
Olivia Tanager, Director, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter
Christi Cabrera-Georgeson, Deputy Director, Nevada Conservation League
Jaina Moan, The Nature Conservancy
Mendy Elliott, Nevada Housing Coalition; Nevada Rural Housing; Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority
Henry Rosas, External Affairs Manager, United Way of Southern Nevada
Hector Arreola, Policy Fellow, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition
Liz Becker, Inflation Reduction Act Campaign Coordinator, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

Chauntille Roberts, Regional Director, Interior West; Vote Solar
Wiz Rouzard, Deputy State Director, Americans for Prosperity Nevada
Michelle Paul, Assistant Vice President, Mental and Behavioral Health, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Tara C. Raines, Deputy Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Eugenia L. Weiss, Associate Dean/Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nevada Reno
Adrienne Renwick, Teaching Associate Professor, University of Nevada, Reno
Kate Cantrell, West Coast Network Director, Youth Villages
Joanna Jacob, Clark County
Cadence Matijevich, Washoe County
Mary-Sarah Kinner, Washoe County Sheriff's Office
Edwin James, General Manager, Carson Water Subconservancy District
Rachel Schmidtt, Conservation Technician, Dayton Valley Conservation District
Tyler Minor, Chair, Dayton Valley Conservation District
Mike Hayes, District Manager, Carson Valley Conservation District
JB Lekumberry, Carson Valley Conservation District

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
This morning, we have a very special proclamation for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Partnership for Research, Assessment, Counseling, Therapy, and Innovative Clinical Education. This is so important because Dr. Michelle Paul stands as a beacon of hope and healing, providing compassionate and researched informed care to individuals and families while shaping a new generation of mental and behavioral health professionals equipped to serve Nevada's diverse communities.

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, has long had this critical hub for clinical training and therapeutic services. But now we have formally designated UNLV Practice as an Institute of Mental and Behavioral Health, affirming its leadership in advancing bold collaborative models that integrate care, education and applied research.

Thank you, Dr. Paul, so much for all you are doing because this new program is going to be such a game changer in Nevada as a whole.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
I just also want to take this time to thank Dr. Paul. She has been so helpful. To all of my fellow senators, if you are ever looking to do anything in the area of

behavioral and mental health, she is definitely a resource. She is an advocate, super smart and all the things we hope to have in our State advocating for our Nevada families. The proclamation is well deserved.

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
We are going to open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 229.

SENATE BILL 229: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-680)

SENATOR MARILYN DONDERO LOOP (Senatorial District No. 8):
As many of you recall, this body has a long history of strong bipartisan commitment to making financial literacy in the classroom a reality for students across Nevada, from college debt, car and mortgage loan payments to consideration about pensions and investments. Many Nevadans are faced with complex financial decisions that sometimes last decades. Oftentimes, recent graduates encounter these decisions with little—if any—experience with the complexities of financial impacts.

The Nevada Legislature recognized the need to bolster the financial proficiency of our youth to ensure they make sound decisions for themselves. Given the work we have done in this area, S.B. 229 expands on this policy to ensure more students benefit from this instruction. This will include financial literacy instruction in kindergarten, first and second grades, opening the door to more students achieving the State Seal of Financial Literacy on their diplomas by changing the grade point average and setting forth options for students to earn the seal. A conceptual amendment (Exhibit C) is in front of you that changes the [2.5] grade point average (GPA) to a 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale as well as on a weighted [GPA] scale.

Senate Bill 229 has an unsolicited fiscal note from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) of $95,573 for the fiscal year (FY) 2025-2026 and $68,969 for FY 2026-2027. I would suggest that they address that issue.

CHRISTINE HULL (Executive Director, Nevada Center for Civic Engagement):
Nevada's graduation seals are more than just a recognition at the end of high school, they are meaningful opportunities for students to deepen their understanding and engagement in essential subject areas. Following the great recession, the Nevada Legislature recognized the urgent need to prepare students for financial independence. In 2009, S.B. No. 317 of the 75th Session

established the foundation for financial literacy instruction across all grade levels. This was followed by bills in 2017 and 2019, which established the [State Seal of] Financial Literacy and the [State Financial Literacy] Advisory Council as well as designating April as financial literacy month. Most recently, A.B. No. 274 of the 82nd Session in 2023 strengthened the council's role to better support NDE in providing resources and guidance for financial literacy instruction statewide.

Over time, we have seen that preparing fiscally responsible adults takes more than classroom instruction, it requires real world application. The proposed updates to the financial literacy seal would expand student participation and allow for greater cross-curricular integration, helping students apply financial knowledge in authentic and meaningful ways. As an educator, I have been involved with the financial literacy seal since its creation and previously served as the program's professional for social studies and financial literacy at the NDE. I have seen firsthand how strong financial education can transform students' futures and strengthen communities.

SENATOR TITUS:
Would you clarify what the fiscal note was—$600,000? That has been changed? Is that what I heard you say initially?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
The fiscal note from NDE—and I will call Amanda Hughes up to clarify—is $95,573 for the first year and $68,969 for the second year. That is to develop the seals, etc.

AMELIA THIBAULT (Director, Division Compliance, Nevada Department of Education):
The fiscal note in place is specifically for the process of adopting content standards. Section 2 expands it to kindergarten through second grade. We do have an established process in the NDE whereby we collect a standards committee. With the standards committee, anytime that they meet, it is usually ten meetings I believe, to convene the standards committee. Associated with that, we have overtime for an education program professional (EPP) and the education director who have to be north and south at the same time to convene the standards committee; we do have them already placed there. There are also stipends for the standards committee, which is a standard cost.

We do have half an EPP position which is in FY 2026-2027. They are going to support developing curriculum and professional development and Canvas courses for those standards in K-2.

Our $6,403 in FY 2025-2026 is overtime, $30,000 in FY 2025-2026 is stipends for convening the standards committee. We do have half a position in our Accounting Unit specifically to process those expenses. Unfortunately, we have incredibly limited staff, and we are currently an average of about 25 days behind processing due to the limitations of staff and the number of transactions that we have to go through. At this juncture, we have been trying to place some amount of at least contract temporary staff to ensure that we are able to continue processing those payments as we add payments at any given time. I do believe that addresses our fiscal note in total at this time.

SUSAN KEEMA (Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Superintendents):
We are testifying in support of S.B. 229.

NADINE KIENHOEFER (Legislative Analyst, Ferrari Reader; Nevada's Credit Unions):
We are in support.

TREVOR PARRISH (Vegas Chamber):
The Vegas Chamber is supportive of this measure and supportive from the fiscal perspective.

TOM CLARK (Nevada Association of School Boards):
We are very much in support of S.B. 229. Financial literacy is really a big deal. There was a time when we were taught that we had to balance our checkbooks using the register and math. Nowadays, with online banking, money can get out of your hands really quick. The financial literacy side of things taught in the school offering this certificate is very important.

CYNTHIA PERINE:
I am very glad to see that there is a financial literacy effort in our schools. I am concerned about lowering the GPA scale.

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
We would probably categorize that as opposition testimony, but I encourage you to send emails or contact the bill sponsor if you have any further questions that you think might need clarification.

I will close the hearing on S.B. 229, and we will open the hearing on S.B. 353.

SENATE BILL 353 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to Medicaid. (BDR S-1010)

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP (Senatorial District No. 8):
Medicaid is the single largest mental health service in the United States and remains a critical pathway to accessing health care. Ensuring access to mental and behavioral health services for Medicaid enrollees is a fundamental aspect of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' mission of supporting the overall wellbeing of individuals through essential care.

The bill requires the Division of Health Care, Financing and Policy of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), also referred to as Nevada Medicaid, to create a specific billing category within the Medicaid Services Manual to the extent of available federal participation. This category is intended for clinics operated by an accredited university within Nevada, or pursuant to a faculty practice plan to which such a university is a party, that provide, under the direction of a physician, mental or behavioral health to Medicaid enrollees; education and training to trainees completing a degree; supervised clinical hours or other requirements for registration; certificate or license as a mental or behavioral health professional.

In addition, this bill establishes two separate all-inclusive per diem Medicaid reimbursement rates for services provided by certain trainees during a visit to such a clinic and describes where the services must be provided by the clinic. This bill also requires DHHS to apply for any waiver or Medicaid State Plan amendment or other federal authorities to carry out the bill's provisions.

Lastly, the bill defines terms used throughout the bill. The Department of Health and Human Services provided a fiscal note that estimates a fiscal impact of over $680,000 over the next biennium.

SENATOR TITUS:
On the Medicaid side, is this going to need a Medicaid waiver? Has it been granted in other states?

ANNE JENSEN (Innovation Officer, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services):
Based on our understanding, this would require State Plan authority, so it would not be a waiver, but we would have to seek federal authority from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services which, as we know, can be a somewhat lengthy process.

The state of Washington has explored this most recently, and I believe that they are in the process of securing this authority. We have been working with them to develop our fiscal note as well to ensure that we are reflecting similar understanding and research.

SENATOR TITUS:
From what I understand in the bill, that wording is already, "If this plays out, then this will happen."

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
All the committee members do have a conceptual amendment (Exhibit D) to S.B. 353. To clarify, because of the nature of Medicaid patients as well as the fact that it has to do with mental and behavioral health, we're able to use some of those provider tax fees in order to cover the Medicaid portion so it is not all General Fund monies. Is that correct?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
That is correct.

SABRINA SCHNUR (Government Affairs Associate, Nevada Psychiatric Association):
We are in support.

ALEJANDRO RODRIGUEZ (Nevada System of Higher Education):
The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) is in strong support of this bill.

SHEILA BREY (University of Nevada, Reno):
We are in strong support and thank Chair Dondero Loop and UNLV for bringing forward this bill.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
I did fail to mention one important thing. The conceptual amendment, Exhibit D, in section 1 authorizes the transfer of the $116,672 in FY 2025-2026 and $138,481 in FY 2026-2027 of the revenue from the assessments imposed in the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 422.3794 from the Account to Improve Health Care Quality and Access created by NRS 422.37945 to the Nevada Medicaid budget account, and authorized federal funding of $211,213 in FY 2025-2026 and $206,127 in FY 2026-2027. This helps with the funding.

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
Wonderful. So, the document that you just read out kind of helps with the transfer of funds in the budget implementation?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
Yes.

VICE CHAIR NGUYEN:
We will close the hearing on S.B. 353.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will move to S.B. 245.

SENATE BILL 245: Makes various changes relating to education. (BDR 34-827)

SENATOR ROBERTA LANGE (Senatorial District No. 7):
Senate Bill 245 improves upon the [State] Seal of the Civics Program, creates an Advisory Council on Civics Education and makes an appropriation to the Nevada Center for Civic Engagement.

In 2012, the Educational Testing Service issued an insightful report called *Fault Lines in Our Democracy: Civic Knowledge, Voting Behavior and Civic Engagement in the United States*. The report warns that many students in the United States lack an acceptable level of knowledge about civics. It has also highlighted a growing concern about civic engagement and consequently the health of the country's democracy.

We have done considerable bipartisan work over the last several sessions to bolster our civic literacy and engagement in Nevada. Part of this work was through S.B. No.194 of the 81st Session in 2021. The bill established a State Seal of Civics Program to recognize high school graduates with a level of proficiency in civic education by placing a seal on their diploma.

Senate Bill 245 creates an Advisory Council on Civics Education to assist with the development and implementation of the Civic Seal Program, including an application process for students, a rubric for identifying the requirements to earn the seal, setting up criteria for excellence awards in schools, student leaders, and educator leaders. It appropriates $20,000 to fund the needs of the program, such as graduation cord design, printing of seals for graduates and developing a website.

You have before you an amendment (Exhibit E). I am proposing to do the following: add additional members to the Advisory Council to include two members appointed by the Governor, one from business and one from industry, one member appointed by the chancellor of NSHE and the Secretary of State or his or her designee; and change the GPA that a student must earn to qualify for the seal from 2.5 to 3.0 on a 4.0 GPA scale or other weighted criteria. The appropriation in this measure would be provided to the Nevada Center for Civic Engagement as a fiscal agent of this program.

MS. HULL:
The Nevada Civic Seal is more than a graduation recognition; it is an opportunity to deepen student engagement in civics and their communities across all grade levels. It recognizes schools, teachers and students for their role as civic leaders. More importantly, it encourages a more focused approach to civic education. Already defined at each grade level in the Nevada academic content standards, each grade level has standards that work towards informed and engaged citizens who can think critically, engage in civil discourse and contribute to their communities with age-appropriate lessons. Democracy is not something students read about; it is something they must practice in today's rapidly changing world. An informed and engaged citizenry is more important than ever.

Civic education goes beyond memorizing the Constitution. It is about understanding rights and responsibilities, being curious about the world around us and driving meaningful change by using their own voice. The Nevada Center

for Civic Engagement has been involved in the Civic Seal since its passage in 2021. We fully support the proposed changes and are dedicating staff time to ensure students statewide can access this opportunity. However, the Program's success hinges on establishing a council to support the implementation. One person at the Nevada Department of Education alone cannot manage this full initiative effectively.

Similar to the Governor's Stem School Recognition Program, the Civic School of Excellence Recognition Program offers schools, teachers and students across all grade levels and all types of schools the opportunity to deepen their commitment to civic engagement within their schools and communities. By modeling what collaborative work within a community looks like, the addition of a council to the Civic Seal Program enables multiple voices to be brought to the table, ensuring Nevada schools have the opportunity to participate in this program and that those voices can expand the program throughout the State.

SENATOR LANGE:
This bill is an important step in ensuring more specifically educated and engaged students graduate from our schools.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
Have there been any changes to the appropriation of that $20,000, to the fiscal note other than what was initially indicated in the bill?

SENATOR LANGE:
It is just the same.

SENATOR NEAL:
This was established in 2021. It is in NDE. Did the districts never perform the task, or was it just a single individual who was doing it? I was looking at the fiscal notes, and Clark County School District was saying they need to travel to meetings, per diem, to cover licensed persons. Lincoln County was saying they were going to need a teacher. [Can you] educate me a little bit?

MS. HULL:
When it was passed, there were two parts to the original bill. One is the actual seal for seniors graduating. The other part is the Civics Excellence Program. We have been able to establish some criteria through a volunteer committee for the actual seal. Putting that in Infinite Campus (IC) has created some limitations for

districts to participate in the seal because there are multiple steps in order for students to participate and get the seal. I know that NDE is working with IC to create a much simpler process for all of the seals so that they can also be tracked so we know how many students are participating. As far as we know, only Clark and Washoe [Counties] and only some schools have been able to give civic seals out.

The other part of the bill is the Civics Excellence Program. Amanda Hughes is the EPP over social studies at NDE as the one person to create a way to take applications, create a rubric and award schools. As one person who does all of the social studies, that is virtually impossible unless she does not sleep, which I think is very important. Unfortunately, that part of the bill has not been taken off. I cannot speak for Lincoln County or Clark County as far as what travel they feel that they need, but there would be no travel required by districts for this.

SENATOR NEAL:
That's what I was wondering. I do not know if that fiscal note is still relevant or not, but if it was absorbed as voluntary … that is what it says. They have a daily cost of participation in the council. Have you not seen that fiscal note?

MS. HULL:
No, I think all the meetings can be handled virtually. I do not think there needs to be any travel with it.

SENATOR NEAL:
What is the issue with IC and trying to program it? Is there a cost to program IC for the seal?

AMANDA HUGHES (Education Programs Professional, Nevada Department of Education):
Currently all districts do not use IC the same way, so putting it into the system in a way we can track it has to be adjusted. There is another bill that is specifically to work with IC. The way it is now, it is a challenge. For example, one of the requirements is the citizenship grades. Currently there is not a way in IC for students or for teachers to track those citizenship grades. That is one of the pieces to put it in there. Also, charter schools [and] other schools do not all use IC. We are trying to get that more universal so we do have a way to track it.

SENATOR NEAL:
I mean, I should not ask this, but I am going to because I immediately just went to elementary where citizenship grades are like a part of life. Are you trying to tell me that the IC system that is used in a high school does not have the same elements that an elementary school has?

MS. HUGHES:
It is not necessarily for tracking the grade; it is for tracking the seal and the requirements of the seal.

SENATOR NEAL:
That makes more sense because I was wondering what they are doing in elementary school with IC.

MS. HUGHES:
Another part of the seal is the service learning project. That is another question, how do we track that appropriately in IC? That's what we are trying to work out.

MR. PARRISH:
The Vegas Chamber is in support of this measure and supports it from the fiscal perspective.

MS. KIENHOEFER:
Nevada's Credit Unions are in support.

MS. KEEMA:
I represent the Nevada Association of School Superintendents. We are in support of S.B. 245. The process of preparing our students to understand and participate in their communities and government is important to our democracy.

MR. CLARK:
I am here on behalf of the Reno Sparks Chamber of Commerce as well as the Nevada Association of School Boards in full support of S.B. 245. This is a time when civics is very important. The Reno Sparks Chamber puts on two seminars a year that try to educate business leaders and others about civics. We start it off with a test, and it is frightening to see the scores at the front end of those classes. [This bill] is very much needed.

BRAD KEATING (Clark County School District):
We are here to support S.B. 245. The fiscal note originally could not be determined based on travel. Based on the conversation today and that the meetings will be held virtually, those concerns would be wiped away. There would be zero fiscal note for the Clark County School District.

CYRUS HOJJATY:
We appreciate the efforts and we are glad that this is being done. We just want to make sure that there is local control and that it sticks on topic.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I will close the hearing on S.B. 245 and open the hearing on S.B. 337.

SENATE BILL 337 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to opioids. (BDR 40-204)

SENATOR ROBERTA LANGE (Senatorial District No. 7):
I am here to talk to you today about opioids and the opportunity for someone that is going to the hospital or to the doctor to ask for a nonopioid medication. Senate Bill 337 requires certain health care facilities and certain providers of health care to provide patients with a form for a nonopioid directive and offer patients treatments that do not utilize an opioid under certain circumstances. It requires the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) of DHHS to create a form for a nonopioid directive, requiring the administrator DPBH to appoint an advisory board to monitor compliance with laws and regulations relating to nonopioid directives. It requires certain policies of health insurance to include coverage for at least one drug that is an alternative to opioids. It also requires certain insurers to provide a form for nonopioid directives to new insureds, revises the manner for which money in the Fund for a Resilient Nevada allocates money to projects and grants and provides for other matters.

I have a conceptual amendment (Exhibit F) because we got tagged with a fiscal note for the implementation of this bill. The fiscal note simply states that the money would come from the opioid settlement money known as the Fund for a Resilient Nevada. It would cover the impacts listed on the fiscal note.

I have another proposed amendment (Exhibit G) that should be in your packet. Nurses and other people that were listed in the bill that would have to implement this and report, do not have that authority. We met with the boards

yesterday, and they have submitted an amendment that would take care of and meet what they need to do within the hospitals and the doctor's offices.

SENATOR TITUS:
I appreciate the listening to the concerns and the amendments.

MS. SCHNUR:
I am with the Nevada Psychiatric Association. We are in support of this bill. This is a great way to help folks who live with substance use disorder or who may be at risk of substance use disorder to have a plan in place for hospitalization. We encourage patients to have a plan in place.

SAJU JOSEPH:
I am a surgeon in Las Vegas, Nevada. I want to give my support for the bill.

MICHAEL HILLERBY (Nevada State Board of Nursing):
I am here on behalf of the Nevada State Board of Nursing. I just want to thank the sponsor and the proponents for helping us and working with us on the issue for boards and how we handle the license renewal and verification. I think I can also speak on behalf of the other boards in this case in saying thank you.

LUCAS FOLETTA (Nevada State Board of Optometry):
We echo Mr. Hillerby's statements. I appreciate the bill sponsor's willingness to work with us.

ADAM PLAIN (Insurance Regulation Liaison, Division of Insurance, Nevada Department of Business and Industry):
The Division of Insurance (DOI) is neutral on the bill. We submitted written testimony (Exhibit H). We did receive a solicited fiscal note request when the session started. We attempted to submit an undetermined fiscal note on S.B. 337 but for some reason, it got dropped and never uploaded into the system.

Going back to DOI's favorite topic of federal defrayal, the division has reviewed S.B. 337 and cannot make a determination as to whether or not this bill will trigger federal defrayal. The written testimony in Exhibit H gives a summary of the situation. Pharmaceutical benefits are treated differently, for purposes of federal defrayal, than standard medical benefits are. Because the bill mandates coverage of a nonopioid whenever an opioid is available, it could trigger federal

defrayal depending on how many opioids and nonopioids are available in a particular pharmacopeial category.

The Division of Insurance does not have expertise and resources available to determine what all of those opioid and nonopioid pharmacopeial categories are. So we are unable to determine if defrayal will trigger or not—and if it does, what the magnitude of it would be.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on S.B. 337 and open the hearing on S.B. 132.

SENATE BILL 132: Makes an appropriation to the Nevada Clean Energy Fund for securing and implementing grants for qualified clean energy projects. (BDR S-593)

SENATOR ROCHELLE NGUYEN (Senatorial District No. 3):
I am proud to sit here and present S.B. 132 with the Nevada Clean Energy Fund (NCEF).

KIRSTEN STASIO (CEO, Nevada Clean Energy Fund):
Senate Bill 132 is a bill that provides support to NCEF's programs and ultimately to Nevada's communities. This is a nonprofit organization that provides financial and technical resources to help Nevadans save money by providing them access to clean energy. It was created in 2017 by S.B. No. 407 of the 79th Session and began operations in 2022. In 2023, we were very lucky to have the Legislature appropriate $1 million to NCEF. Since then, NCEF has leveraged the State's investment by over 200 to 1. We have secured more than $200 million in federal, private and philanthropic funds and put it to work providing financial and technical assistance to diverse Nevada stakeholders from households and affordable housing developers to local governments, tribes, schools and small businesses.

I know this year has demanding and difficult budgetary choices for Legislators and Nevadans alike. But an investment in NCEF is a smart one because it is an investment in housing, education and in Nevada's economy. I will give you a few examples. Our Nevada Solar for All Program will reduce household utility bills for roughly 50,000 Nevadans over the next four years and create nearly 1,000 high quality jobs with family-sustaining wages. As another example, in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Energy, we established a

Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Program that helps small businesses reduce their utility costs by pursuing energy efficiency improvements.

Lastly, our Clean School Bus Program is bringing 25 electric school buses to rural school districts, reducing fuel and maintenance costs and creating healthier air for our children. Programs like these are critical tools that Nevadans need, particularly in times of hardship. An additional investment in NCEF today can ensure we make the most of the limited resources available to our communities. It continues to strengthen our capacity to bring even more funding into the State and reach more Nevadans with our programs.

To conclude, I would like to direct the committee's attention to the four letters of support submitted by NCEF that have been provided to you. Our letters have 21 signees who represent affordable housing developers, advocates for clean energy, businesses and trade associations, community groups and tribes.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
Hopefully you all were provided information that I emailed to each of the committee members regarding some of the options. I know that we obviously have budgetary concerns. I think one of the things that I look at when I am sitting up there on the dais at some of these appropriation bills that come before us is how those organizations were able to take the money that we previously allocated to them in the past and were able to leverage that. I think one of the big questions that Senator Titus often asks, as well as other members is, "We gave you money last time, where else do you get money?"

This is an excellent example of where they were able to take $1 million that we were able to allocate them during the 2023 session and bring in nearly $200 million to our State in such a short period of time. They were able to distribute that money to local businesses to lower electric costs, not only for businesses but individuals. That is what we are doing here today.

I did give this committee multiple options and broke them down by how many projects we could fund and how we could expand these things in real numbers because I am a data-driven person. I appreciate NCEF for getting me that information so you can see what an investment of even $500,000, $1 million or what the $5 million would mean for our State. If you do not have that information, I will make sure that I provide it to you.

KANANI ESPINOZA (Senior Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Nevada Hand):
Nevada Hand is the State's largest nonprofit affordable housing developer. Following the State's initial $1 million investment in 2023, Nevada Hand has worked closely with NCEF and witnessed its effectiveness in leveraging state dollars to attract significant federal, private and philanthropic funding. For example, NCEF has secured $156 million from its Solar for All award with substantial portions dedicated to affordable housing. The energy cost savings delivered through this program will enhance tenant services and diminish funding gaps. We urge your support.

ANDREA MARTINEZ (Chair, Nevada Clean Energy Funds Tribal Advisory Board):
I am the former chairwoman of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, and I have seen the value of NCEF's programs firsthand. Collaboration with NCEF is instrumental in securing funds that benefit tribes by lowering energy bills. These energy projects also benefit the State by creating good paying jobs for electricians, plumbers, roofers, and more in the rural counties that neighbor reservations. For example, NCEF is currently providing technical assistance to eight tribes to unlock Department of Energy residential upgrade funding. With NCEF support, these tribes will bring hundreds of thousands of dollars to their communities and start saving on their home energy bills. I support an appropriation to NCEF because of the financial and economic benefits its programs bring to tribal and rural communities. An investment in NCEF this year will pay for itself many times over. I urge your support.

WENDY COLBORNE (Chief of Staff, Building and Construction Trades Council of Northern Nevada):
Not only do we work to provide a skilled construction workforce for the State, but we also own, operate and develop union built affordable housing in the Reno area. We have worked closely with NCEF to help ensure that projects like ours have the resources they need to make their affordable housing projects.

We work with below 30 percent area median income at our 100 percent affordable senior preference housing complex. We have seen what a difference a reduced utility bill can make for seniors on fixed incomes. The Nevada Clean Energy Fund is truly an investment in Nevada and its people. We strongly support S.B. 132 and encourage you to do the same.

ALEX TANCHEK (Silver State Government Relations; Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe; Duck Valley Shoshone-Paiute Tribe; Vitality Unlimited; Stericycle):
I want to echo some of the comments previously made regarding the support for tribes. Viable power is always a challenge for Nevada's tribal communities and NCEF has been a tremendous partner in helping tribes achieve their energy independence. Vitality Unlimited is a nonprofit certified community behavioral health center that operates numerous facilities in rural Nevada. Nonprofits receive green energy assistance, and we also appreciate your support on this bill.

OLIVIA TANAGER (Director, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter):
We are also here in strong support of this appropriation. We believe that this is the highest and best use of our state resources in order to support communities across Nevada in securing clean energy.

CHRISTI CABRERA-GEORGESON (Deputy Director, Nevada Conservation League):
This is a top priority funding bill for Nevada Conservation League this legislative session. A letter we submitted has 26 organizations and businesses from all across the State in support of this bill. Recent polling shows that 79 percent of Nevadans want NCEF to continue to be funded. We urge the committee support.

JAINA MOAN (The Nature Conservancy):
We stand in full support of S.B. 132. By providing technical and financial assistance, the Nevada Clean Energy Fund brings hope and opportunity for people and communities who want to generate their own electricity with renewable technologies. The Nature Conservancy supports this bill because we think it is important to encourage and incentivize development of distributed generation opportunities and resources across the State.

MENDY ELLIOTT (Nevada Housing Coalition; Nevada Rural Housing; Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority):
I am here to express our strong support for this bill. Rural areas often face unique challenges in assessing clean energy resources due to limited infrastructure and funding. The provisions in S.B. 132 could help bridge these gaps, facilitating the development of renewable energy projects in underserved regions and reducing energy costs for low-income residents. We commend Senator Nguyen for sponsoring this forward-thinking legislation and urge the

committee to support the funding for S.B. 132. The bill represents a significant investment in Nevada's clean energy future.

HENRY ROSAS (External Affairs Manager, United Way of Southern Nevada):
As a partner on the Nevada Solar For All-Community Solar Program, United Way supports community members through the application intake process and monthly benefits process. We stand in support of S.B. 132 because of its ultimate support for low-income communities to find and obtain sustainable and affordable energy solutions.

HECTOR ARREOLA (Policy Fellow, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition):
We want to echo the previous comments and urge the committee to support this bill.

LIZ BECKER (Inflation Reduction Act Campaign Coordinator, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada):
I am calling in support of S.B. 132. I also serve on the Nevada Clean Energy Fund's Persistent Poverty Community Council and have seen the dedication and care that NCEF staff bring to their work. As mentioned, NCEF already has a great track record of responsibly managing public funds. This small appropriation will go a long way in helping lower income Nevadans access renewable energy and lower their utility bills while also helping Nevada get closer to our renewable energy portfolio standard goals. I also want to ditto previous comments.

CHAUNTILLE ROBERTS (Regional Director, Interior West; Vote Solar):
I am testifying in support of S.B. 132. I would like to echo the sentiments of everyone in Carson City and Las Vegas and urge this committee to pass S.B. 132.

WIZ ROUZARD (Deputy State Director, Americans for Prosperity Nevada):
On behalf of numerous grassroots activists throughout the State, we respectfully submit testimony in strong opposition to S.B. 132. While we fully support clean air, environmental stewardship and continued innovation in energy markets, S.B. 132 is approaching it in the wrong way. It is one that distorts the energy marketplace by directing taxpayer dollars to politically preferred technologies and risks undermining the economic well-being of Nevadans, especially those who are most vulnerable.

The approach of S.B.132 is simply a market distorting subsidy by way of using public funds to provide a bridge or gaps funding and technical support for certain "qualified energy projects," which inherently favors selecting technologies and energies of their liking. This undermines competition and shifts risk from investors to taxpayers. Failed taxpayer subsidies to qualified clean energy projects is nothing new to Nevada because we are reminded of the Crescent Dunes Energy Project that received over $750 million from the federal government through taxpayers and had completely failed. What taxpayers were left with was to inherit the risk and financial loss. Now, we do understand that this is a 501(c)(3) that receives the money and does different services, but part of those services and assistance provides and directs it towards certain technologies.

With Nevada still recovering from the economic volatility and budget constraints, committing $5 million to speculative energy ventures, which many rely on fragile subsidies, is fiscally irresponsible. At Americans for Prosperity, we believe that affordable, reliable energy is a key driver of prosperity and economic opportunity, and our energy policy principle emphasizes supporting bottom-up innovations that emerge from the private sector and not top-down mandates or politically driven funding. Removing regulatory barriers to voluntary efficient environmental progress rather than reinforcing them is going to promote policies and fuel technologies that are neutral and allows the market to determine the most efficient cost-effective solutions. For these reasons, we ask you to oppose the appropriations being requested through S.B. 132.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Seeing none in neutral we will open the hearing on S.B. 165.

SENATE BILL 165 (1st Reprint): Establishes provisions relating to behavioral health. (BDR 54-145)

SENATOR ROCHELLE NGUYEN (Senatorial District No. 3):
I have the now infamous Dr. Michelle Paul, the Assistant Vice President of Mental and Behavioral Health at UNLV Practice, and I have Dr. Tara Raines, the Deputy Director of the Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada.

I know we have already discussed in great detail the policy aspects of this bill. By way of providing context for the fiscal policy, I will let you know a little bit of information about how it was introduced. It was through the two women

that are presenting here with me today as well as my city councilman, Brian Knudsen, who brought us all together to come up with ways to address and figure out how we could deal with the growing problem and the lack of resources and workforce development in areas of children's mental and behavioral health.

What this bill does is seek to create a new profession. We have worked very closely with the Ballmer Institute which sought to do this in Oregon by making a significant $450 million investment at the University of Oregon to create this degree program. Even in Oregon, as they are starting to turn out graduates in the next couple of years in this new bachelor's level program, they are still going through the licensing process. So that is also included in our bill. There is potentially an opportunity in addition to the allocation to the different universities including the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), and Great Basin College at this time, we would not only be able have a place for those workers that are coming out of the University of Oregon trained in this new profession, but we would also be able to home grow that workforce development here to fill that developing need we have already in our community.

MICHELLE PAUL (Assistant Vice President, Mental and Behavioral Health, University of Nevada, Las Vegas):
Regarding the Psychology Internship Program, S.B. 165 does a few things to address the need regarding children's mental health. We need more providers across the spectrum. We need more providers ready to do early intervention. That is the bachelor's level. At the other end of the spectrum, we need psychologists who specialize in working with children and families, psychologists with their particular specialty skills.

Unfortunately, there are no American Psychological Association (APA) accredited psychology internships in Nevada. That is a full-time capstone residency training year that is required for licensure, and students have to leave the State. In fact, from UNLV, seven of seven doctoral students specializing in child psychology are leaving the State in July to get their residency training. At UNLV Practice, we are equipped to create the first APA accredited pediatric psychology residency training program in the State.

TARA C. RAINES (Deputy Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance):
I just want to thank the Senator for bringing this forward. This is a bill that came out of our Children's Mental Health Action Coalition, a group of providers, parents, trainers and youth in Nevada who feel that this bill captures an effective way to address the workforce shortage. In addition, this bill also includes funding for scholarships to incentivize young people and people across the State to study fields related to child mental and behavioral health.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
There is a conceptual amendment (Exhibit I). We were able to look at—after talking with Director of DHHS, Richard Whitley—some of the seed money to even investigate this program and whether or not this would be something for our State. Dr. Michelle Paul had received a grant of opioid funds through DHHS to institute this.

In lieu of an appropriation from the State General Fund, we would require the Director of DHHS to allocate the specific sum from the Fund for Resilient Nevada, which is created in NRS 433.732. That would have paid for the allocations to not only UNR, UNLV and Great Basin College but NSHE as well to be able to start both these internship programs. To be accredited you need three. So that $1.2 million would help start that first residency program, allow us to not lose these professionals and have them remain in our State.

In addition to a new section to carry out section 66, we would ask this committee to transfer $68,705 in FY 2026-2027 of the revenue from the assessments imposed pursuant to NRS 422.3794 from the Account to Improve Health Care Quality & Access created in NRS 422.37945 to the Nevada Medicaid budget account to authorize federal funding of $115,171 in FY 2026-2027.

To put that in layman's terms, that is using provider tax money to pay for the Medicaid portion that would be required in this bill. As the bill stands here today, there are no State General Fund monies that would be used to implement and get these programs started.

EUGENIA L. WEISS (Associate Dean/Associate Professor, School of Social Work, University of Nevada Reno):
I am here in support of S.B. 165. Under this bill, the school of social work would be able to provide microcredentialing and a bachelor's program in child

and behavioral health in order to develop our workforce to meet the needs of young children and adolescents in terms of receiving the care that they need for mental and behavioral health services.

MR. RODRIGUEZ:
The Nevada System of Higher Education is in strong support of this bill.

ADRIENNE RENWICK (Teaching Associate Professor, University of Nevada, Reno):
I would like to express my support of S.B. 165. I would also like to add that we have been working with Senator Nguyen on a proposed amendment that would add the School of Public Health and Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies (CASAT) to the bill; CASAT is a center under the School of Public Health at UNR. Within the center, we have an undergraduate minor in addiction counseling, which is the largest minor on UNR's campus, and several advanced certificates and behavioral health training clinicians to competently diagnose and treat co-occurring disorders.

The proposed amendment would establish a 24-credit advanced online graduate certificate in co-occurring behavioral health and wellness at UNR, specifically designed for licensed school counselors seeking to meet the educational requirements for clinical professional counselor licensure in Nevada. Currently, there is no statewide pathway for Nevada school counselors to achieve an independent mental health licensure due to the accreditation standards through the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, which requires a 12 to 1 student to faculty ratio. This means that our Nevada master's programs do not accept students only requiring a handful of credits for licensure. This issue also extends to individuals wishing to relocate to Nevada and become counselors who have completed a program out of state.

As recognized in the research behind S.B. 165, Nevada continues to face a severe mental health workforce shortage. Our youth face unmet mental health needs due to the shortage of providers in our State. Of additional concern is that according to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration data, Nevada's adolescent substance use rates rank higher than national averages. Our youth are particularly vulnerable with higher rates of illicit drug use, marijuana use and opioid misuse. These high rates of substance misuse are the reasons we propose to develop a coursework that would train clinicians on co-occurring disorder treatment.

Nevada has an untapped resource of trained professionals who, with additional specialized education, could significantly expand our mental health workforce while maintaining their commitment to Nevada's youth. This amendment could impact Nevada positively by strengthening Nevada's mental health workforce through the creation of a clear pathway for qualified professionals to expand their scope of practice, encouraging the retention of school counselors by providing career advancement opportunities and contributing to the development of school based mental health programs.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Hearing none in opposition or neutral we will close the hearing on S.B. 165 and open the hearing on S.B. 281.

SENATE BILL 281 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions relating to foster care. (BDR S-144)

SENATOR ROCHELLE NGUYEN (Senatorial District No. 3):
This bill started off making sure that we were going to be able to continue with extended foster care. We were lucky that as a part of the Executive Budget, it was included in there. In talking with the counties and knowing that this was going to be a new expanded population in the rural areas come July 1—should everything in the budget pass—it will go into effect where our rural extended foster care program will begin. Support programs include LifeSet which is run through a nonprofit called Youth Villages and provides direct, one on one contact, wraparound services and a whole litany of things.

Initially, this bill came as an allocation of state General Fund monies. When we were doing the presentation, there were a bunch of workers from SEIU [Service Employees International Union] that happened to be in the audience testifying on another bill. They were people that administered this program in Clark County. I also learned that Washoe County had just recently started this program and was having a great deal of success as well.

During this, DHHS Director Whitley came up to me and said, "This would be a perfect program." Those of you that sit on this money committee, and I know a majority of you sit on the Senate Committee on Finance and Assembly Committee on Ways and Means Joint Subcommittees on Human Services, you heard a lot about the direct correlation and connection between our foster youth as well as opioid addiction.

[In an amendment], (Exhibit J), this now has become a transfer of $2.5 million of opioid settlement funds from the Fund for a Resilient Nevada to the Division of Child and Family Services, Clark County and Washoe County. That would be able to cover some of this extended programming for our new population of extended foster care youth that will be provided for in our rural communities. We will also allow the funding source to continue in both Clark County as well as Washoe County.

In addition to this, you will see that there is another conceptional amendment (Exhibit K) that I have included in this bill. It adds an additional $15.1 million from the state General Fund to the Division of Public and Behavioral Health, DHHS, for an allocation to Clark County of $8.1 million, and $7 million to Washoe County for jail-based behavioral health programs.

As you will all remember, we had discussed this during the budget subcommittees over and over again about this program that was very successful both in the Washoe County Jail as well as in the Clark County Detention Center that was being administered, that was really helping make sure that people remained competent after they returned from either Stein Hospital or Lake's Crossing Center or were able to get them into what is not a competency restoration program that is offered in the jail. But it does make sure that people are on their medication, and they are continuingly taking their medication when they return back from having their competency restored. It is a crucial part of what we have all learned is a huge problem within our justice system in trying to get people into those forensic beds that are totally lacking.

Unfortunately, we did not include it in our closing budget, so I have added this on. I was told it was germane by the Legal Division, so it is now included in this bill as well. I know I have been talking with the DHHS. Previously, this was American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded, and so we believe we have found some other additional ARPA funds that would be able to do that. Hopefully, I will be able to come back here with further amendments that take that $15.1 million out of General Fund and back into ARPA to be able to continue what is a needed program of prevention and maintenance.

KATE CANTRELL (West Coast Network Director, Youth Villages):
Youth Villages is a national nonprofit organization. We are testifying in strong support of S.B. 281. I want to thank Senator Nguyen for sponsoring this

important bill and for her commitment to improving the lives of foster youth in Nevada.

JOANNA JACOB (Clark County):
I am here in support of S.B. 281. Two really critical components for Clark County are funding our older youth in foster care, which is always a need for us. We appreciate Senator Nguyen's commitment to that population. Secondly, is funding to support our jail-based programming over the next biennium. That is a very successful program, and we would not have been able to continue it without this funding. We appreciate the support very much. We will continue to work with Senator Nguyen on this as it goes forward.

CADENCE MATIJEVICH (Washoe County):
I am pleased to be here in support today for S.B. 281. We are so grateful to Senator Nguyen for bringing this forward and for being such an advocate for these important programs. I know many of you sat on the subcommittees and heard about both of these programs. Those of you who sit on the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services have also heard from us throughout the session about having resources available for these critical programs. We are so grateful that this measure is before you and would ask please for your support.

MARY-SARAH KINNER (Washoe County Sheriff's Office):
We echo the comments; $7 million for the jail-based mental health program will fund our very successful program through the next biennium. Similarly to Clark County, we would be unable to continue that program without this funding.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on S.B. 281 and open the hearing on S.B. 231.

SENATE BILL 231: Establishes provisions relating to the collection and destruction of unused drugs. (BDR 54-564)

SENATOR JEFF STONE (Senatorial District No. 20):
The appropriate and legal disposal of expired or unused prescription drugs is important to prevent drug diversion, protect our landfills and safeguard our finite water supplies. The issue is that there are not enough of these drug disposal bins in Nevada to appropriately and conveniently discard pharmaceuticals. The Nevada State Board of Pharmacy in 2025 has identified the number of existing

drug disposal bins and pharmacies in Nevada and shared with the database of the Drug Enforcement Administration that Las Vegas has 40, North Las Vegas has 3, Henderson has 10, and Reno, Sparks and Elko have 4.

Making it more convenient for citizens to dispose of their unused or expired pharmaceuticals will minimize drug diversion and inappropriate disposal. Because of the inconvenience of finding drug disposal boxes nearby, many people may just throw their pills in the rubbish, polluting our landfills or often flushing their pharmaceuticals down the toilet, forever tainting our water supplies. The solution is installing more drug disposal bins in retail pharmacies throughout Nevada.

What will this bill do? It will encourage and not mandate that pharmacies, especially chain stores within the market share, consider adding more drug disposal bins statewide. This will make the service better advertised and available and expand to more convenient locations for patrons to utilize. Pharmacies that install these bins cannot by legislation, charge a fee for patrons that use the bins to discard their pharmaceuticals.

In summary, Nevada has a shortage of drug disposal bins. This is a voluntary program, and it is not a mandate. The service is free to any citizen to discard their pharmaceuticals responsibly and safely. This will reduce illicit drug diversion. This will stop depositing these potentially toxic drugs into our landfills and water supplies. The Statewide Substance Use Response Working Group committee has recommended a $500,000 allocation from the opiate settlement fund or the Fund for a Resilient Nevada.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I was actually really surprised recently when I went to dispose of some drugs that these were not in every single pharmacy. It literally never occurred to me. I do not take a lot of medication, so I did not have a lot to dispose of, but it never even occurred to me that they were not in every pharmacy.

SENATOR TITUS:
Frequently in our area the sheriff's department will have a "bring back your drug day" and a lot of folks do not want to go to the sheriff's department to bring back their drugs. So this will help alleviate some of that.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
[That is] correct on all accounts. We have the same thing in Las Vegas, some drug disposal days. But I am not sure that is where you are taking some of your drugs.

MR. TANCHECK:
Stericycle is a company that specializes in the destruction of medical and pharmaceutical wastes. Drug take back bins are a proven source in not only helping combat the opioid epidemic but also keeping pharmaceutical compounds out of the environment and our water systems. We encourage this work.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
Hearing none in opposition or neutral, we will close the hearing on S.B. 231 and open the hearing on S.B. 108.

SENATE BILL 108: Revises provisions governing the Account for the Channel Clearance, Maintenance, Restoration, Surveying and Monumenting Program. (BDR 48-88)

SENATOR ROBIN TITUS (Senatorial District No. 17):
With me at the table is Edwin James, the general manager of the Carson Water Subconservancy District, to help me present this bill. A little bit of background information, S.B. 108 revises provisions governing the Account for Channel Clearance, Maintenance, Restoration, Surveying and Monumenting Programs. Under current law, the State maintains a fund to support projects for clearing, maintaining, restoring and surveying navigable waters. The state engineer manages this fund and may request additional fund money from the Contingency Account if the balance falls below $250,000 or it is inefficient to issue grants.

This will make two key changes, and Mr. James will go into that with a little bit more detail, but it raises a threshold for discretionary funding requests from the Contingency Account from $250,000 to $500,000. This bill also clarifies that only uncommitted funds are counted when determining the balance. These updates aim to ensure the timely availability of resources for critical waterway projects across the State.

EDWIN JAMES (General Manager, Carson Water Subconservancy District):
Today I would like to discuss why S.B. 108, which is commonly known as the clearing and snagging bill, is important to pass and fund. As you may be aware, Nevada claims ownership to many of the riverbeds across the State. With that ownership comes the responsibility of ongoing maintenance. Over time, sediment can accumulate in river channels, reducing capacities and increasing flood impacts or infrastructure damages. Additionally, fallen trees and other debris can pose safety hazards. Cleaning and maintaining the river channels is done by local entities. On the Carson River, it is the conservation districts that perform this maintenance and work on behalf of the State. Their main funding source for this effort comes from the State. These funds are critical not only to maintain routine maintenance but also can be used as match for federal grants for larger projects.

Senate Bill 108 addressed two key issues to declaring channel status. First, it increases the funding cap for the channel clearance account from $250,000 to $500,000. Second, it allows the state engineer to request additional funding from the Contingency Account to replenish the Channel Clearing Account excluding committed funds. Both these provisions are essential. Increasing the funding cap from $250,000 to $500,000 recognizes the rising cost of channel clearance. The current cap hampers progress by requiring a state engineer to return to the Interim Finance Committee multiple times to seek additional approval for more clearing and snagging projects to move forward.

The second provision addresses a timing issue. Currently, if funds have been committed to a project but not yet spent—usually it is delays due to permitting issues—the state engineer cannot request additional allocation from the contingency funds until funds in the clearance account have been spent. This restriction prevents other projects from being funded even if there is a demonstrated need. This provision of S.B. 108 clarifies that the State Engineer can request additional funds when the balance in the funds—not including the committed funds—drop below the funding cap. Carson Water Subconservancy District urgently asks your support for this. I believe some additional information was provided (Exhibit L) on the history of this legislation and on some funding that has occurred for this account.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
You are correct. We have the paper, Exhibit L, in front of us with the history.

SENATOR TITUS:
This money is not just used in the north. It has been used throughout the State for river clearing.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
I would love to ask questions, but this is such a detailed description. The history is very interesting to me as a native Nevadan.

MR. PARRISH:
The Vegas Chamber supports this measure and is supportive from the fiscal perspective.

RACHEL SCHMIDTT (Conservation Technician, Dayton Valley Conservation District):
The district fully supports this bill. We have used the grant funding for vital channel clearing work over the years to prevent flood damage, mitigate erosion and preserve wildlife habitat.

TYLER MINOR (Chair, Dayton Valley Conservation District):
This bill strengthens Nevada's ability to manage flood risk and protect infrastructure by ensuring consistent funds in channel maintenance and restoration. It is especially important where well maintained waterways support public safety, public infrastructure, agriculture and local ecosystems.

MIKE HAYES (District Manager, Carson Valley Conservation District):
We support this bill. It really helps to get the river work done. It is the correct amount of money for the scope of the work that is usually involved.

JB LEKUMBERRY (Carson Valley Conservation District):
I think everything has been explained well but as a business owner in the Carson Valley, the infrastructure … this also works because our floodplain is … we do not have any river water storage on the Carson River. We are the first floodplain that affects the Carson River, and it is critical for the infrastructure and the bridges. We see a great impact. It is really the whole community.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
We will close the hearing on S.B. 108. Hearing no public comment, we are adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Virginia Weitzel,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

DATE:

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	**Exhibit Letter**	**Introduced on Minute Report Page No.**	**Witness / Entity**	**Description**
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 229	C	4	Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop	Conceptual Amendment
S.B. 353	D	8	Senator Rochelle Nguyen	Conceptual Amendment: Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop
S.B. 245	E	10	Senator Roberta Lange	Conceptual Amendment
S.B. 337	F	14	Senator Roberta Lange	Conceptual Amendment
S.B. 337	G	14	Senator Roberta Lange	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 337	H	15	Adam Plain / Division of Insurance, Department of Business and Industry	Neutral Testimony
S.B. 165	I	23	Senator Rochelle Nguyen	Conceptual Amendment
S.B. 281	J	26	Senator Rochelle Nguyen	Conceptual Amendment 1
S.B. 281	K	26	Senator Rochelle Nguyen	Conceptual Amendment 2
S.B. 108	L	30	Edwin James / Carson Water Subconservancy District	Legislative History and Channel Clearance Account Summary