MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE OPERATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Eighty-third Session
April 3, 2025

The Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections was called to order by Chair James Ohrenschall at 3:51 p.m. on Thursday, April 3, 2025, in Room 2149 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 5 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.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator James Ohrenschall, Chair
Senator Skip Daly, Vice Chair
Senator Lisa Krasner

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro (Excused)
Senator John C. Steinbeck (Excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Rochelle Nguyen, Senatorial District No. 3
Senator Melanie Scheible, Senatorial District No. 9

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pepper Sturm, Committee Policy Analyst
Suzanne Efford, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Laura McSwain, President, Water Fairness Coalition, Inc.
Stacy Standley, III, President, Spanish Trail Master Association
Kelly Kopp, Professor, Extension Specialist, Utah State University; Director, Center for Water Efficient Landscaping, Utah State University
Christi Cabrera-Georgeson, Deputy Director, Nevada Conservation League

Alexandria Cannito, Community Associations Institute
Norm Schilling
Betsy Slight
Diane Henry
Robert Gomperz
Carol Reynolds
Yvette Williams
Tera Anderson
Christopher Allen
Louis Grandieri
Brian Wignall
Amelia Wignall
Eric Jeng, Executive Director, One APIA Nevada
Robert Coache
Deon Blaney
Lisa Ortega
Robert Hillson
Al Lasso
Cyrus Hojjaty, Strong Towns Las Vegas
John Rando
Andrew Belanger, Director of Public Services, Las Vegas Valley Water District; Southern Nevada Water Authority; Springs Preserve
Anahit Baghshetsyan, Research Assistant, Nevada Policy
Emily Persaud-Zamora, Executive Director, Silver State Voices; Let Nevadans Vote Coalition
Ashley Kennedy, Clark County
Jennifer Willett, Senior Campaign Manager, All Voting is Local
Kaylah Maese, Civil Rights Analyst, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada
Esmeralda Vazquez, Campaign Legal Center
Paula Luna, Deputy Director, Battle Born Progress
Bri Schmidt, Silver State Equality
William Moore, Nevada Civic Engagement Director, Mi Familia en Acción
Lorena Biassotti
Leslie Quinn
Janine Hansen, State Chairman, Independent American Party
Lynn Chapman, Vice President, Nevada Families for Freedom
Ellen Gifford
Yolanda Knaak
Sean Sever, Deputy Administrator, Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles

Mark Wlaschin, Deputy for Elections, Office of the Secretary of State
Iris Stone
Jim DeGraffenreid, Nevada Republican Party

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:
I would like to open today's hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 143.

SENATE BILL 143: Revises provisions relating to natural resources. (BDR 17-10)

SENATOR ROCHELLE NGUYEN (Senatorial District No. 3):
For those of you familiar with my district, a large part of my district, including my own neighborhood, the McNeil neighborhood, has older and often historic neighborhoods. With those older neighborhoods, we often have mature landscaping and a tree canopy that is often 50 to 75 years of age. A lot of times people will forget they are in Las Vegas when they drive through our communities because—and I know Senator Ohrenschall has some similar areas in his district; Senator Daly probably doesn't have to experience the lack of greenery and trees—when you drive through some of these older historic neighborhoods, you have larger properties with large, mature landscaping and older trees that have been a part of our community and a part of the Las Vegas Valley for a very long time.

The residential communities are really the closest things to urban green spaces we have in our communities, especially in some of our older neighborhoods. Some of the municipalities are investing in parks and green spaces in newer development areas by building new parks and increasing those greenscape areas. Many times, homes in our neighborhoods are providing that same kind of garden, park-like experience.

I always start off by telling people why these bills are important, why I am bringing them and what the basis is. It started off by listening to my neighbors, including my neighbor who's sitting next to me, Laura McSwain, and neighbors in other areas, including surrounding districts that include Senator Steinbeck's and Senator Ohrenschall's. I know Senator Scheible and other areas around the district have similarly situated older historic neighborhoods with mature landscaping and communities.

I also listened to neighbors who were hit in recent years with excessive water charges, conservation requirements and other incentive programs such as tree

rebates, xeriscaping and septic conversions. What I heard over again, the reality of these programs, while I believe they have good intentions, is they disproportionately affect people who live in my district and communities around the State that are very similarly situated.

To give you some examples of why I'm bringing this bill and why I think we need to have a broader conversation about this is we have people who are removing mature existing trees to qualify for tree rebates. They are taking out a 50-year-old tree and putting in a sapling that is under 5 years of age. I heard from several seniors in my district who purchased their homes in the 1960s when they were first built. They are now seniors. A lot of times they are on fixed incomes, and they can no longer afford these water charges to maintain the landscape they've had around their homes for 60 years.

I've also heard from residents, and I've had the same experience, who can no longer afford the water fees to maintain their existing landscape or their pools that are grandfathered in and are sometimes deeper and larger than new pools. But they also can't afford to replace their landscaping with anything required under some of the rebate programs.

I heard some of the policies we have passed in previous sessions, including the removal of nonfunctional commercial turf; and during those hearings, we heard over again—even on bills that I signed on to, agreed to, voted in favor of and passed—we're not supposed to affect residential communities. You'll hear today there are residential condominium communities that see this and read this as a mandate. They are now mandated to take out some of that communal grass in condo communities. This is causing extremely expensive conversions that I didn't think were going to be required of these communities when we passed that legislation.

I've heard stories of people who have tried to comply with reduced watering only to see their trees and shrubs die after nearly five decades of being in their community. I've also seen people start to replace things with artificial turf; and as we have discussed—and Senator Neal, I know, has brought legislation around this area that I have supported—we have concerns about the use of artificial turf and forever chemicals like PFOS [perfluoro octane sulfonic acid] that are sometimes contained in those artificial turfs and what that does to the heat island effect we are facing with an ever-growing, hot climate in Southern Nevada and across this entire State.

I think what people probably know about me is I have a background in law, and I've done criminal defense work, so I know having programs in place that are fair and just are also important. What I've learned over the course of the last six years in this area is the bulk of what we do under the name of conservation and water conservation falls solely on the City of Las Vegas. For example, you can own a home in Henderson that has the same layout, you are watering the same amount, and you are not hit with excessive water fees because you live in Henderson. But if you live in Las Vegas, you are hit with those excessive water fees that can sometimes be in the thousands of dollars. For those of you who know me, my commitment to just and fair policies can only be fair and just if they are applied fairly and justly. Regarding excessive water fees, policies are not being applied fairly or justly. If it is in fact a fair and just process, it should be applied fairly and justly across the entire State.

That brings me to where we are now with S.B. 143. In contemplation, I talked about this direction and what we were going to do. We had many conversations over the past 18 months leading into this—you can see by the low bill number it was probably the very first bill I filed—about what we wanted to do. Did we want to ask for a study? Did we want to audit the water district? Did we want to convey a working group? When it came down to it, we wanted to convey something, and we wanted to also get direction from this committee on what you wanted to see, all with the hope that we can start bringing science to the table to replace politicians who make these decisions, including ourselves, when it comes to creating water and water conservation policies that are fair and just.

I hope we can replace some of these appointed people who sometimes have financial motivations of their own with members from the communities that are impacted. That's why I brought people with me today to talk about that impact. Instead of hearing from lobbyists and people who work within the industry, we want to hear from people who work in the industry.

At this time, I would like to turn it over to my neighbor, turned advocate, Laura McSwain. I'm so happy to be sitting here with her, and I think it is representative of how this issue affects everyone in our community, my district in particular, and in our State because we don't always agree on things, but I think we need to start having that conversation. Committees like this and the Legislature need to hear from people in the community who live this, feel this and are advocating for this.

LAURA MCSWAIN (President, Water Fairness Coalition, Inc.):
I am a native of Las Vegas, and I am old enough to remember getting water out of the springs and wells of Las Vegas when I was a young girl.

The Water Fairness Coalition was established in August 2023 in response to the obvious disregard of resident concerns during public meetings held at the Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD) and the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) specifically around the excessive use charge penalties. That was my initial inspiration. At the time, I was president of the McNeil Neighborhood Association; and the residents in that neighborhood, as Senator Nguyen so graciously shared in her presentation, were greatly concerned about what was going to happen to our urban tree canopy.

A one-size-fits-all method, regardless of lot size, makes outdoor water use unaffordable and impacts more than the intended targets. That's really where the danger lies. One deputy general manager stated to me privately, "Well, if you want to maintain your quality of life, you can always just pay the excessive use charges."

Southern Nevada Water Association's "Project Armageddon," what they call it internally, may end up being prophetic. The only study on the impacts of these policies that came from a records request was one demanded by Clark County Commissioners during an election cycle that estimated how many voters might be impacted. Of course, the rules change was not put into effect until after that election.

The predictable devastation coming from recent policy initiatives is now visible and killing the very things that serve to protect us from increasing temperatures. For the first time in the history of LVVWD and SNWA, they have taken steps to go after existing residents for water savings. Water policy has been created through fear and intimidation under A.B. No.356 of the 81st Session, the excessive use charge penalties, and A.B. No. 220 of the 82nd Session.

We have appealed to those currently in power to oversee these districts for two years. What has been discovered during our efforts to appeal to reason ranges from questionable supporting documents at public meetings to the cover-up of a water pressure failure that was in violation of administrative safety requirements. Bottom line, trust has been lost within our community. Proper oversight is lacking. We believe S.B. 143 provides a first step toward

protecting our community and requiring LVVWD and SNWA to operate within their charters.

Patricia Mulroy, former general manager of LVVWD and the architect of SNWA, keenly stated, "We cannot conserve our way out of this." The one question I ask that you keep in mind as you listen to the rest of the presentation—what is the point of chasing water savings only to end up environmentally bankrupt? And is it even necessary?

I will turn the presentation over to Stacy Standley, President of Spanish Trail homeowners' association (HOA) and former three-time mayor of Aspen, Colorado, who will speak to the impacts of misguided rules that quite frankly exceed the legislative intent of A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session which serves as a major example of why S.B. 143 is so important. I have also submitted written testimony (Exhibit C) supporting S.B. 143.

STACY STANDLEY, III (President, Spanish Trail Master Association):
You've got my résumé in my written testimony (Exhibit D contains copyrighted material. Original is available upon request from the Research Library.) which I don't want to go through because it is very easy to read. What I would like to do is explain how I ended up with such a strong commitment to the environment, either professionally or as a giver-back to it.

I spent my graduate and undergraduate years at the University of Colorado working on a ranch up in Estes Park, Colorado, in Rocky Mountain National Park. My days off were spent climbing in the Never Summer Mountain range on the west side of the Continental Divide. To get to the climbing area, you took a path that led through an area with old mining claims, and there was one little old village called Lulu City, Colorado. In Lulu City, you'd get down on your hands and knees and fill your water bottle so you could go on to the rest of the trek and up to the mountain. When you filled your water bottle in that Lulu City stream, it was about a foot deep and maybe six or eight feet wide, and there were little rivulets running into it. That is the headwaters of the Colorado River. I started my affair with the Colorado River in 1964.

Fast forward, after getting out of college and beginning my professional career, I worked as a whitewater river boatman on the Grand Canyon for a number of years. Moving forward even further, I then became a consultant to the Colorado

River Indian Tribe in Parker, Arizona, that I am sure you are all very familiar with.

We were hired to help them develop a land use master plan for the Parker Strip, the 11 miles of the Colorado River between Parker Dam and the Headgate Rock Dam, which is literally the end of the Colorado River. From there, it would flow into the Gulf of California. However, it hasn't done that for years now, as I am sure all of you know. With that background, the Colorado River has been part of my life—I am 80 years old, so I guess for most of my life.

Moving to Nevada 20 years ago, I went out and got my scuba certificate in January in Lake Mead. I've seen the bottom of the lake through the eyes of a lens. What that's led me to believe is that protecting the water is absolutely critical, but to not use it wisely is also just as critical. When we look at A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session and the notes that came from Assemblymember Howard Watts who said A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session is not intended to target common areas in communities, common areas in these communities are considered functional turf—that was the whole intent of the bill as we all understood at that time.

When you read the bill, it really seems to be a knee-jerk reaction without any forethought as to what it was intending to accomplish and how it was going to accomplish that because it simply states no Colorado River water may be used for nonfunctional turf. No definitions, no penalties, no further description of what that meant or where it was to be applied.

For example, I will give you more specifics on Spanish Trail. When we had a meeting with SNWA and we asked the question, "When we remove this turf that you have now mandated for us to remove, do we have to change our irrigation system and put in drip irrigation, Netafim, all these new technologies that are available," the answer was no. You take out the turf, and you can continue to use spray irrigation. That was important to us because we have 6,000 trees in Spanish Trail that we do not want to lose. The point of that is we can take out the turf, the trees still need the same amount of water, and we can still use the same irrigation system. So A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session serves no function. We will not be required to save any water. We will only be required to destroy our environment.

The impact of A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session is where I would like to focus a little bit today. A newspaper recently quoted that the City of Henderson was going to remove 144,000 square feet of grass this year. That's about three acres. The City of Las Vegas is undergoing a similar effort to remove about 140,000 acre-feet [*sic*], also three acres. They are taking out six acres of grass in those two cities. We've received a mandate from SNWA that we at Spanish Trail and our 400 acres have to remove 578,000 square feet. That's 13 acres. That is over twice as much grass as the City of Henderson and the City of Las Vegas are going to remove. Before A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session was ever introduced, we removed 550,000 square feet.

By the time we comply with A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session, we will have removed a million square feet of turf in Spanish Trail and put 6,000 trees at risk. The reason we know they're at risk is because we received a letter (Exhibit E contains copyrighted material. Original is available upon request from the Research Library.), which is in your packet, from the Southern Nevada Arborist Group, which consists of 120 certified arborists working in the Clark County area, stating very clearly that grass under trees is vital to the health of the trees and both provide environmental benefits. I am not going to get into that because Dr. Kelly Kopp is an expert in that field.

But the point is, where is the equity in that? And then you look at the recently produced study by DRI [Desert Research Institute], using Henderson again, where they said what is the impact of urban heat and turf removal? One of their findings was that grass under trees only uses 50 percent of the water as open field grass. Therefore, if we keep the grass under our trees, we can meet the water requirement reductions SNWA feels very strongly we need to do.

In talking to the parks and recreation director in Henderson, I asked her if they were losing trees and she said, yes, we are losing trees. I asked what they were going to do about it. She said they were going to replace each lost tree with three new trees. I said a 40- to 50-year-old mature tree is producing a huge canopy of cooling oxygen and air, and three new trees with a three-inch caliper—I'm not going to live long enough to ever get any benefit from that canopy. She agreed.

Now I will take a quick look at Spanish Trail. It has 1,200 homes on 400 acres of land. It was developed in 1984, so it is fairly old by Las Vegas standards. It has 11 subassociations, and—this is an important point—our subassociations

start at 1,100 square feet and go up to over 10,000 square feet. It is very much a mixed-use community. The cost of meeting the A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session mandate for Spanish Trail, using numbers produced by members of the SNWA water resource committee producing the guidelines, was that we will have to spend $7.3 million or $6,000 a home to meet the guidelines of turf removal as mandated by A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session.

And it gets worse—SNWA is discriminating against townhomes. We have four subassociations that are townhomes. These are the 1,000- to 1,500- to 1,600-square-foot homes, and they are rowhouses. By U.S. Census and by Clark County P&Z [planning and zoning], these are defined as single-family homes. However, SNWA has defined them as condominiums, and they have to remove their front grass. The single-family homes get to keep both their front yards and their backyards. For these 1,100-square-foot homes, their cost of turf removal can be as high as $9,000 per home; and our bigger single families, because they don't have to remove any turf, are in an area of $200 to $300 a home. There is no equity there. It is a badly thought-out plan.

So getting down to why we are doing it. Do we have a water crisis in Nevada? I worked on this for the Senator who was the chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Water Resources in Washington, D.C., in the late 1970s and early 1980s. What we are experiencing is a cyclical weather event. The last one, interestingly, was exactly 800 years ago, and it went from 1200 to 1225. That is when the Anasazi Indians moved out of the southwest area of the United States and migrated into northern New Mexico, southern Colorado and Arizona where there was a more livable climate in those days. This is cyclical, not a permanent situation.

If the dry, bathtub ring in Lake Mead continues to descend and goes all the way down to dead pool, which is about 895 feet, there will still be 2.5 million acre-feet of water in the lake, and that will create a lake of 47 square miles. We are not out of water. If that happens, the only city that can access that water is Las Vegas because there will be no water flowing through Hoover Dam or through the penstocks driving the turbines. The City of Las Vegas gets that water, and that is because of the vision of Patricia Mulroy in developing the third straw that went into effect 11 years ago.

Do we run a real risk of ever getting to dead pool? There's a real question there. In the last 100 years, the lowest flow of water through the Colorado River at

Lees Ferry—which is below Lake Powell, which is the measuring point for the southern districts of the basin—was 5 million acre-feet. The compact calls for 7.5 million acre-feet using an unusually wet period when they wrote the Colorado River Compact.

The worst year we have had since then, even in this 20-year drought, was only 15 percent below what the actual Compact calls for. If we hit the dead pool, we still get the water in Las Vegas. We are the only ones that can get it, and we have that water by legal right. We do not have a water crisis. We have a trumped-up plan to satisfy perhaps egos, perhaps building developers for Bureau of Land Management land that should be bringing their own water in just as they do in Maricopa County in Arizona.

In closing, I would just like to say that the issue is both the turf and the trees because they live together symbiotically to provide the quality of environment we have. Las Vegas started as a railroad stop to provide water for steam engines. That was its genesis. It has grown to the point that it is now a vital community that has a very strong, good environmental ethic. We are running the risk of destroying it. The grass and the trees provide oxygen and many other environmental, social and economic benefits for all of us. I hope that by looking at including this in S.B. 143, we can address this issue so that we protect our environment and do not let it be squandered through unnecessary legislation.

KELLY KOPP (Professor, Extension Specialist, Utah State University; Director, Center for Water Efficient Landscaping, Utah State University):
I am Utah's landscape water conservation and turf grass specialist and direct the Center for Water Efficient Landscaping. This presentation (Exhibit F contains copyrighted material. Original is available upon request from the Research Library.) is more about our Center for Water Efficient Landscaping because I think it has a bearing and provides some context for why I am here with you today. The Center was founded 26 years ago by some very forward-thinking faculty members and Legislators who saw a need for water conservation in the landscape. Faculty, staff and graduate students associated with us work on all aspects of water-efficient landscaping research, which we then share with the public and others who can use the information.

Today, I am here to speak in support of an amendment to A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session that would make an exception for grass growing under trees. Of course, A.B. No. 356 of the 81st session was aimed at reducing Southern

Nevada's reliance on Colorado River water by mandating the removal of nonfunctional turf grass. But the term nonfunctional in this case is misleading. Just like all plants, grasses perform many environmentally important functions, several of which you see on the slide, Exhibit F, such as producing oxygen, sequestering carbon and atmospheric cooling. These are just a few of the functions of grasses in the landscape. A 5,000-square-foot lawn, for example, can produce enough oxygen for as many as 34 people.

Word about this bill has certainly gotten out. States like California have passed similar bills or are considering bills like this. California's bill, Exhibit F, signed into law in October 2023 with phased implementation beginning in 2027, also focused on commercial, industrial and institutional properties as well as common areas in HOAs. The bill defines nonfunctional turf as turf grass that is not needed to serve a human function such as recreational, civic or community events.

Like Nevada's bill, California's Assembly Bill (A.B.) 1572 does not apply to single-family residences, including those in HOAs. It also does not apply to multifamily residential properties or to areas where recycled water is used for irrigation. However, there is one big difference between California's bill and A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session. That is that there is an exception for turf grass growing under trees to ensure the health of the trees. There is good reason for this exception. The reason the California bill has an exception is that in 2008 when they began turf removal programs, they were strictly voluntary, and those programs went on for many years. What they learned, however, was there were many unintended negative consequences. I will only share one of those with you here today, and that was incredible numbers of trees dying.

They took that experience when they crafted their own bill and took a different path. Other states have also adopted nonfunctional turf bills, states like Colorado. However, Colorado has made exceptions for grass species and varieties that are well adapted to its climate. Colorado has also exempted existing landscapes that may not be in compliance. Then there are other states like my home state of Utah and Texas that also have turf removal programs that remain voluntary. And I will just share that in San Antonio, Texas, they actually choose to focus more on irrigation rather than turf removal because they simply have not seen the water savings from turf removal.

Related to that—the way Colorado approaches turf removal and the turf grass question—I wanted to share an example from Utah. This is a program that is run in Salt Lake City called the Salt Lake City Turf Trade in which the city helps its residents transition high-water-use grass areas to low-water-use grass areas. It does this to meet the needs for future growth.

I helped it choose the varieties it used based on turf grass trialing programs. But I think this is a really illustrative example to show you what it did. Salt Lake City used one of its pump station properties to show residents how to make the transition. [The presentation includes] an aerial image, Exhibit F, of the property. The transition included a full landscape redesign, upgraded irrigation, transition of the remaining turf area to low-water-use turf; the existing turf was mowed short, killed with herbicide and then overseeded with the new low-water-use grasses until it was fully established. What you see on the presentation are the before and after photos, Exhibit F. So before, a larger turf area which was transitioned to demonstrate what a more usable turf area would look like, and then the after photo with the low-water-use turf grass. Once these areas were established, which took six weeks, the water use on the property was reduced by 50 percent. That has continued since 2021. The property is only irrigated once per week regardless of the time of year. That has been a very successful demonstration of what can be done with low-water-use grasses.

As I mentioned, when talking about the various services provided by grasses, atmospheric cooling is one of the most important. Plants help cool the atmosphere by shading and evapotranspiration. These cooling effects not only reduce temperature, but they also significantly reduce energy use, cooling costs and the associated carbon emissions from power plants.

In the images [in the presentation], Exhibit F, which I do not think you can see the temperature, I will explain to you. These were all taken in the same location and show an air temperature of 94 degrees, a water temperature of 94 degrees, a natural grass surface temperature of 104 degrees, a bare sand temperature of 132 degrees, an asphalt temperature of 136 degrees and a synthetic turf temperature of 165 degrees. These are all in the same location. Now, I know that artificial turf is one of the recommendations given in the State for low-water-use landscaping, but that should be balanced against the increase in heat it brings.

Related, there's been increasing urban heat island impacts in many cities across the country. That includes Las Vegas, which has had the most intense urban heat island effect as compared to 59 other cities across the country recently. And I would like to share a bit more about that.

We have been experiencing warmer summers in this country since 1970. We also know that cities are hotter than rural areas. But this is becoming increasingly important because heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths. It disproportionately affects both very young and very old people whose bodies have little ability to regulate temperature. There's also more ozone pollution associated with urban heat which can lead to other health issues like asthma and additional respiratory problems. In addition to that daytime heat, Las Vegas also has the unhappy distinction of having the most intense overnight urban heat island effects. This is a concern because it prevents people and plants, for that matter, from having any time to recover from extreme daytime temperatures that increase the risk of heat-related illness and disproportionately affect vulnerable populations.

Studies like this generally recommend more trees and more parks to deal with it to help mitigate these effects. That is certainly a good approach. But I would add to that recommendation that more plants of any type, really, not only help to reduce the urban heat but also provide additional benefits like absorbing carbon dioxide and sequestering carbon which have more environmental benefits.

My colleague, Mr. Standley, mentioned the study in Wells Park, Henderson, Nevada, conducted by the Desert Research Institute. What I am going to quickly explain is that in the images [in my presentation], Exhibit F, the cooler colors represent cooler temperatures. The image on the left represents Wells Park before turf conversion, the image on the right, after turf conversion. We can see a difference there. But what about quantifying that difference? The three lines on the top [of the image], Exhibit F, the red, orange and peach colors—represent temperatures after turf removal. The lines on the bottom, shades of blue, represent the temperature before turf removal. The average temperature at the hottest time of the day indicated by the middle of the two sets of the lines occurred at 2:30 p.m. and differs by 30 degrees Celsius or 54 degrees Fahrenheit. That is a rather significant increase.

The authors concluded the turf areas where they were collecting the thermal imagery were the coolest features they mapped, and turf removal would lead to warmer surfaces during hot, sunny weather, regardless of what other surface treatment was applied. They also recommended preserving trees as much as possible because their work corroborated other research that quantified the benefits of trees for cooling.

In reviewing DRI's report, I also came across additional research out of Israel. This research was conducted in the Negev Desert which has a very similar climate to Las Vegas. They evaluated the cooling capacity of different landscaping strategies and determined what was most cool when they were considering trees, grasses and the use of shade mesh and every combination of those. Without getting into too much detail, I will share that when looking at the shade mesh, they found that anytime shade mesh was used, temperatures were higher, and that includes over just bare grass areas. But the really important point that I want to emphasize is when they looked at trees alone, there was certainly cooling. When they looked at turf alone, there was certainly cooling. When they looked at trees and turf together, they found the cooling effect was amplified. The two plant categories complement one another and provide some synergy there.

The enhanced cooling described by the combination of trees and turf grass is one really compelling reason for amending A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session to provide exceptions for turf grass growing under trees. California's experience with tree death is another.

Lastly, and this has more to do with the overall intention of A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session, I would like to share the water savings potential of different approaches to landscape water conservation. I have research projects I will share in the information with the committee to back this information up. But in the interest of time, I will just share the take-home messages. What you can see [in the presentation] Exhibit F, are significant amounts of water savings associated with varying approaches to water conservation: the use of low-water-use grasses, for example, reducing water requirements by 30 percent to 40 percent; auditing and testing of irrigation systems, reducing water requirements by 20 percent to 30 percent; the use of smart irrigation controllers and appropriate irrigation scheduling, reducing water applications by as much as 55 percent. These are incredibly significant water savings that do not require turf removal.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
Ms. McSwain, you referenced overreach. What specific examples can you provide to suggest they are operating outside of the charter?

MS. MCSWAIN:
Under the Las Vegas Valley Water Act, LVVWD is required to determine water rates based on the cost of water delivery and providing water. There is an element within the law that suggests they can adjust rates to encourage conservation. But in looking at records requests I have received; they were clearly targeting residents. I mean, they've listed them and given them to the media as the top 100 water users. I do not think that is within their charter.

They also spend approximately $35 million a year in advertising. I am finding that the advertising is heavy-handed. It ends up not providing accurate information to the community, and it is misleading. Those are just two stark examples, and there are many others, but in the interest of time, I will leave it there.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
When Senator Nguyen talked about inequities of applying that, why doesn't the one-size-fits-all on that … It is not fair. I do not know if there are any natural grasses in Las Vegas. I am sure there were some. Why wouldn't you just go back to the original desert landscape to save water? It may not always be feasible. I understand we will have other questions about the trees and various things.

MS. MCSWAIN:
As far as going back to the original desert, if we were going to go back to the original desert, that means going all the way back. The desert happens to be, and Dr. Kopp can confirm this, one of the most sensitive ecosystems in the world. You've disturbed that crust, and now you create all kinds of problems.

When we come in as humans and we start disrupting that, we are elevating the temperatures, we are taking away those cooling impacts, and you start rolling out asphalt and concrete and glass and reflective materials. By introducing landscape—and granted, people wanted lush landscapes, coming from Chicago and places like that—we are not advocating for every blade of grass. I am not trying to save every blade of grass. I am trying to create balance. You know, SNWA had a concept when it was very proactively protecting mature trees. I do

not know why it would have dismissed that completely in favor of just mere water savings because you have a vicious cycle. We can't go back all the way to that desert unless we all leave the desert. Does that answer your question, sir?

VICE CHAIR DALY:
I think so. And then last one, so you referred to water pressure failure?

MS. MCSWAIN:
In talking about that element of trust and let me start by saying—and I apologize that I should have shared this at the front end—there are a lot of remarkable accomplishments from SNWA. It has extended our water supply through technology, through recycling and what have you. But somewhere along the line, we have lost sight of the human element in all of this.

Because of this organization I have created, people are finding me now because they are at a loss. They're not getting responses from LVVWD. They're in fear of what they are losing. I received an anonymous email from somebody saying that part of the community lost water on December 16. With a water pressure failure, when you have no water access, there are specific protocols that you are required to administer, including a boil water notice, including sanitizing the lines. It has really turned into a full-fledged cover-up. I actually went out and talked to residents and got a confirmation that they had these failures. The Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) started an investigation. It actually accepted an explanation it thought made engineering sense, and it turned out it was all a ruse.

We are talking about trust and oversight and going back to why S.B. 143 is so important. Some of the oversight should be sitting in the hands of the boards of directors, the Clark County Commission for the Las Vegas Valley Water District and then the other SNWA board. It is falling on deaf ears. We have been going before them for two years, and I even turned over all the documents that I provided to NDEP on the water failure. If it was not for the efforts of people from inside the water district who do not agree with what is happening, providing me these documents, the community would have never known about it. I find that to be very troubling when you are thinking about an agency that has been given wide berth to self-regulate.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
We talked about A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session which is not the bill we are hearing. We have not yet heard anything about the bill we are actually hearing. Senate Bill 143 is about giving some authority to the Interim Committee [Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources] and maybe directing a study. We want to get to that. I know we are going to have some people back and forth on this stuff. I just want to try to make sure we are staying where we are supposed to be. I want to help the Senator who brought the bill get some of the stuff that she wants on the record. So, we will do that.

So, Mr. Standley, how are the costs of the turf conversion in your presentation calculated?

MR. STANDLEY:
After A.B. No. 356 of the 81st Session was enacted, SNWA set up what they called NTRAC. That was their Nonfunctional Turf Removal Advisory Committee. This was to be composed of representative groups within the community, sitting as an advisory board to them and coming up with the guidelines for what was going to be considered functional and nonfunctional turf and for applying for a waiver to protect certain parts of your turf.

Some of those members were very skilled. One of them was the head of landscaping at Sun City Anthem, which is 12,000 homes in Henderson, probably the most knowledgeable person in the State who is an active daily manager of water resources. He undertook the conversion of properties up at Sun City Anthem, and he determined that after you took the rebate provided by SNWA for the turf removal on a per square foot basis, you still needed to spend about $7.50 a square foot to come up with a reasonable quality of turf removal with xeriscaping replacement.

When we did our numbers so we could make our waiver request, we used his numbers as an NTRAC member and as a professional landscaper to do the extension of those numbers to the amount of turf we were required to remove. We have just finished completing our first waiver request approval by SNWA. We had 160,000 square feet. They let us keep 60,000 square feet, and we got rid of 90,000 square feet. The cost of that to us turned out to be $13 a square foot before the $60,000 rebate. It turns out a net cost of $11 a square foot, which is far above the numbers that we have actually used to do the projections for the rest of the community.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
All right, I think I understand. Dr. Kopp, how do states find grasses that are adaptive? I know there's science and they do a lot of that up north to breeds and stuff. How do they figure that out?

MS. KOPP:
In recent decades, there's been a major effort by turf grass breeders and turf grass scientists to create new varieties of grass that use much less water. Part of that involves trialing programs that are conducted across the country in different states. I conducted a number of these trials in states like Utah, Arizona, California, Oregon, Georgia and a lot of states back east. Unfortunately, not in Nevada at this point because we have not found anyone to cooperate with here yet. But through these trialing efforts where we test the same varieties across many different environments, we can identify varieties that use much less water. We test them under drought conditions. We literally turn the water off and see which ones perform the best. These will have come through breeding programs both at universities and by seed companies, and they are always trying to create new products. We test them and then provide the data back so we can positively identify the best-performing varieties. In this case, varieties that require much less water.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
Those are all the questions I am going to ask. Does anybody want to actually walk through or tell us about section 1 and section 2 of the actual bill, or do we want to just move on to testimony in support?

MS. MCSWAIN:
I have got the language of the bill here, and just to clarify, I feel that our presentation and the issues the community is experiencing illustrate very well why something like this is needed—some oversight to what is occurring within the operational agencies. I mean, we have got consolidated power. We have got the same executive team running both agencies. We've got the same general manager who's also the lead negotiator on the Colorado River. The county commission that everybody's got their … It is just conflicted; it just seems like something's been lost. And I look at the way Patricia Mulroy managed the community; of course, having been here as long as I have, I am very familiar with her and her history. I think there are probably things within the bill that are within the various legislative actions that the Legislature has taken over the years that deserve another look because … notifications issues, right? The

actual residents do not get direct notifications on rate changes. That was the problem with excessive use charges.

CHRISTI CABRERA-GEORGESON (Deputy Director, Nevada Conservation League):
We are here in support of S.B. 143. As the driest state in the country, Nevadans place a high value on the conservation of our water resources. In fact, recent polling showed that 92 percent of Nevadans are concerned about inadequate water supplies in our State. It is critical that the State and some of our interim committees look at how we can do more robust planning for our water resources and make sure we are coming up with solutions that work best for our State.

ALEXANDRIA CANNITO (Community Associations Institute):
The Community Associations Institute supports this bill.

NORM SCHILLING:
I am an arborist and horticulturalist in Southern Nevada. I have been doing it for 35 years. I do a radio show on our NPR station about gardening in the Las Vegas Valley. I worked for LVVWD for almost ten years as the lead groundskeeper. I took care of their well site reservoirs; and later, I took care of the desert demonstration gardens. I was part of the original team that instituted the turf reduction programs back in the 1990s. I am an environmentalist. I am also here as an advocate for the trees of Southern Nevada.

The trees are the most important thing, especially the heritage trees in Las Vegas Valley, in combating both global and local warming. Trees are often dependent on the grass in which they grow. Trees spread out their root systems like the spokes of a wheel, often extending 1 1/2 times to as much as 4 times the canopy diameter.

The removal of grass, which is sometimes referred to as nonfunctional turf around the base of these trees, is devastating to them. I do probably over 1,000 consultations across the Las Vegas Valley. I travel all over the Las Vegas Valley. I teach, and I educate. I have watched the absolute decimation and degradation of our urban forest to a degree I never imagined possible. This has been occurring because of these draconian ordinances put in place by SNWA and LVVWD through their heavy propaganda and millions of dollars they spent pushing their agenda.

But the unintended consequences to Las Vegas Valley are huge economically, environmentally and for our quality of life. The heritage trees that we have—one large tree—They are kind of whitewashing this or green-washing it by saying we are going to pay you …

One last thing I want to say is the excessive use charges which are absolutely huge have caused many of my customers to have to make the choice between do I kill my trees, or do I pay my mortgage? They're killing their trees, and they weep.

BETSY SLIGHT:
I am a homeowner in Henderson, an avid gardener and a landscape designer specializing in water-smart landscapes. I strongly support S.B. 143. Our mature trees must be maintained with adequate water. People should not have to choose between watering their existing trees or being fined. A tree provides beauty and value to the homeowner but also to their neighbors and the entire community. Aside from their natural beauty, trees provide important shade to humans, animals and other plant life. They provide shelter for birds and insects. They clean our air. Please help us protect our trees.

DIANE HENRY:
I am a member of the Water Fairness Coalition, but I am speaking today as a private citizen.

To the detriment of many, there's been clear overreach by SNWA in many of its policies. Its septic waiver program is a noteworthy example. In 2023, A.B. No. 220 of the 82nd Session outlawed new septic systems. Since then, property owners on municipal water but without access to sewer have languished. Their land had become worthless. They could not build, but they could not sell.

Thankfully, there was a safety net in A.B. No. 220 of the 82nd Session for waivers. But where were these waivers? The Southern Nevada Water Authority has been stalling for almost two years, details of which have been provided to you as my testimony (Exhibit G). But for the record, I would like to amend (Exhibit H) that public comment. Exhibit G stated that the septic waiver application was buried on the SNWA website which was correct. You had to use the menu bar on the left, not the search bar on the right. Click on rebates, coupons and programs, then under septic to sewer conversion programs; click

on septic waiver request and you would find the application. But SNWA has added a search link for it to SNWA.com. So, I would like to amend my comment, please.

But the fact remains that if the legislative intent of A.B. No. 220 of the 82nd Session was to provide waivers as a safety net for afflicted property owners, SNWA has not done a good job of it. There is little transparency as well as major overreach with many of their policies.

Senate Bill 143, I hope, will help correct that by providing oversight. I support S.B. 143, and I thank Senator Nguyen and this committee for this important bill.

ROBERT GOMPERZ:
I am a retired manager of public affairs at the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. I was employed there for 17 years before I retired and moved to Las Vegas about 15 years ago. I served ten years as an elected member of the Foothill Municipal Water District in La Cañada Flintridge, California. I am in my thirty-fifth year of board membership at the Lincoln Avenue Water Company in fire-ravaged Altadena, California. So, I know a few things about proper water policy development and administration.

The Las Vegas Valley Water District was created in 1947 by *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 167 at a time when there were less than 25,000 residents in this Las Vegas Valley. The water supply came from wells; and in 1954, the Legislature installed a partisan-elected Clark County Commission as the district's governing board. In 1990, SNWA, through additional legislation, became the wholesaler of Colorado River water in Clark County. Rather than stumble through the alphabet soup of its Clark County water agencies, I refer to them simply as the "water cartel."

In the lower Colorado River basin, Nevada is the only state whose primary policymakers on water issues are not elected to water boards or water commissions but have inherited those very crucial offices by an outdated legislative fiat. Water is a critical matter for the current and future health of this region. Water agencies should have their own popularly elected nonpartisan, citizen policy boards, not a self-appointed group elected to a different office.

Clark County Commissioners also serve on a variety of other community agencies. The chair of the two major water cartel boards is on nine boards. The

road to this governance change is necessary, and it is only through the State Legislature which 78 years ago set up what worked then, but it is now a nonrepresentative dysfunctional system. It is time for change.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
We have a bill in front of us. I know people are upset with the water authority, but the bill is not about the water authority. If you have comments in support of the bill, I am willing to hear that. If you are just going to say how horrible the water authority is, that is not the subject of the bill. So please stick to the subject of the bill.

CAROL REYNOLDS:
In trying to convey to you the enormity of what has transpired in Las Vegas with the enactment of water policies since 2023. It is difficult to overstate the level of hardship and disruption delivered by SNWA to Las Vegas residents.

The water rate increases and excessive use fees have been life-changing for many. The surreptitious process caught everyone by surprise. It was thought initially that once board members and water authorities understood the drastic financial, environmental and health ramifications, there would be a more measured approach with willingness to include residents, horticulturists, environmentalists, et cetera, in studying ways to maintain quality of life for all residents while ensuring an adequate water supply. That has not happened.

Local residents have appealed to water authorities for two years in their public board meetings to pause and reconsider the implementation of these punitive policies and to study their effects. People have turned out to speak about using egg timers for showers so their family can afford the water to properly care for an elderly relative. A woman told of having to move since she could not pay the water bill at her rented house. People have sheepishly spoken about monitoring toilet flushes while expressing horror that their neighborhoods are now blighted with dead trees and abandoned landscaping. They are desperately trying to save their yards and the tens of thousands of dollars invested in them.

Perhaps the most disturbing story of all is the Spring Valley High School football player who was burned on the artificial turf athletic field during practice. The litany of stories offered by residents has fallen on deaf ears. So, I urge you to carefully study the water issues with all disciplines to avoid irreversible damage to our city and its residents. It is for these reasons that I support S.B. 143.

YVETTE WILLIAMS:
I am chair of the Clark County Black Caucus, but I want to just say that I am not speaking on behalf of the Caucus today, I am speaking as a resident of District 3. Senator Nguyen is my Senator, thank God.

I am speaking today in support of this bill. I would like though to say on the record that I would much rather see "shall evaluate and review issues" instead of "may evaluate and review issues." Include other policies that have been implemented by SNWA and LVVWD related to these various issues that are in the bill already, but also include others such as the excessive fees, costs in the community and tons of money. It is unfair only the City of Las Vegas residents, only those in unincorporated Clark County are suffering those excessive fees.

I want to say that most recently a visitor came into the neighborhood with a young child. She was looking for another neighbor in the community. She knocked on my door, and I answered, and first thing she said to me is "oh my God, birds singing. I do not get to hear birds sing anymore." That was telling in itself.

The other thing is my backyard is a certified wildlife habitat. We are helping to support this ecosystem that's so fragile here in the desert. We have to protect our urban canopy. We have to protect our smallest inhabitants here if we want to survive.

The other thing is our trees in our older neighborhoods are struggling. I go to my neighborhood park, Davis Park, and I am looking at our tree canopy disappear before my eyes. We've lived in our home for 22 years, and it is very sad to see. I am seeing my neighbors, and I am getting emotional, but I am seeing my neighbors leave in droves from my community. It is heartbreaking to think that my community that I moved here 20 almost 30 years ago is being destroyed by bad policy and a lack of oversight. I am just saying to our Legislature, we have elected you to represent us and to fight for us. We ask you to fight for us today and save us from these horrendous policies.

TERA ANDERSON:
I am here to speak specifically to the language pertaining to the excessive use charges and the oversight terms of this bill that I am in support of.

For context, I have spent a career of over 20 years in economic and real estate development, and the current conduct of SNWA and LVWWD defy all rules of engagement for real estate development.

Whenever something new is built or erected, a development plan requires evaluation of the capacity of any utilities that will be consumed or burdened by the introduction of a new development, whether it is retail, office, industrial, hospitality or residential. The development standards for each of those asset classes are unique. However, SNWA is trying to apply a universal standard across all residential products. That defies development code.

You have different components, whether it is single-family homes, condos, townhomes, ranch-style homes, et cetera. These need to be treated according to the policies of development standards. More importantly, when something is approved for development, a will serve letter is granted and issued by the utility provider to the owner of that property in perpetuity. The actions taken by SNWA to impugn [*sic*] us with these penalties is a retroactive taking. If that is not overreach by the body of our water authorities, I do not know what is. But a taking of private property after will serves have been provided is unacceptable and requires additional oversight.

The other thing is this is suffocating diverse residential offerings and the quality of life within our community. Additionally, when it comes to safety, urban studies will show that the absence of landscaping and trees is the first sign of urban blight and consequently rises in crime rates. This is not just an ecological issue; it is a quality of life and well-rounded safety issue.

My one last comment is on a safety component side of this. Traffic studies are performed with new development. Trees are known to be one of the most significant traffic-calming components when considering new development. So please consider this bill and the quality-of-life impacts that it will have on our community.

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN:
I am in support of S.B. 143. The residents of Las Vegas need your help in saving our trees and saving our quality of life. Real grass around trees is necessary for old mature trees to survive.

The excessive usage fees are wildly unfair and the direct cause of Las Vegas losing thousands and thousands of very mature trees. I support S.B. 143.

LOUIS GRANDIERI:
I am in support of S.B. 143. There are issues with artificial turf in that temperatures can exceed 200 degrees Fahrenheit (F) on a 98-degree F day. Synthetic turf is always significantly hotter than natural grass, concrete and asphalt, and greatly concerning.

A New Jersey Work Environment Council fact sheet states be aware of artificial turf hazards in which there are toxic materials, latex and other rubbers in the materials. Also, there's a short life to artificial grass in that it will only last five to ten years. Then it must be disposed of which can be 120 tons of crumbling rubber—26,000 recycled tires. Rubber takes about 25 years to break down completely.

Taking grass out from schools and putting in artificial turf—I do not know how you are going to keep it clean. You've got birds that will be dropping their droppings on this grass, and so it has to be cleaned off somehow. Water is going to be needed to clean off these areas at the schools.

The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, did an environment and quality-of-life study that is available online. There was also a heat study done in conjunction with the Regional Transportation Commission in Las Vegas measuring heat islands that is available online as well that you can look at. It shows how you have large heat islands in places where trees and grass have been taken out.

There are EPA studies about using trees and vegetation to reduce heat islands available online as well and for your perusal.

BRIAN WIGNALL:
I am here to speak in support of S.B. 143. Yesterday, my wife tried to enter comments on this bill through NELIS [Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System]. She was asking for any approved research on artificial turf to include the impact on wildlife that both artificial grass and our current water restriction policies are having. There seems to have been a problem as her comments included photographs and research citations. According to her research, including photographs and public comments about legislation in Nevada is allowed as long as they are relevant to the topic and do not violate copyright or

privacy laws. The photos included were taken personally and in public areas and comply with copyright and privacy laws. These photos were included to allow committee members to see firsthand the impact our policies are having on wildlife. She also learned that there is no prohibition on citing research in public comments in Nevada, but it is crucial to ensure citations are accurate and properly attributed. She did both because now more than ever with so much misinformation being presented as fact, it is important to cite legitimate sources to validate statements.

Today, I am joining my wife in submitting an edited version of these comments (Exhibit I) without photos or research citations. This has been a confusing and frustrating experience in trying to exercise civic duty, especially as one would think that adding to the knowledge base of our Legislature would result in better outcomes. In deference to the wishes of the legal counsel and with respect to the committee, I encourage more clarity and better communication of what is acceptable in submitting comments for the future. I would like to submit the comments, Exhibit I, and the redacted photos (Exhibit J contains copyrighted material. Original is available upon request from the Research Library.).

AMELIA WIGNALL:
I support S.B. 143. Las Vegas is located on the route of the Pacific Flyway, a major migration route for thousands of birds traveling between Alaska, Canada and California to Mexico and South America. Every spring and fall, these birds, including ducks and geese, pass through Southern Nevada looking for places to stop, rest and refuel during their journeys. However, as urban sprawl increases, we are failing to provide even the most basic stopover habitats.

Last year, a yellow-billed loon, one of the ten rarest birds that breed on the mainland of the United States, was found in the fountains of the Bellagio, making international headlines and halting the resort's fountain shows. Why? Because the city's expanding artificial landscapes have left migratory birds with nowhere else to go.

For over 20 years, we have observed migrating geese and ducks gather to rest under trees on grassy slopes of Canyon Gate Country Club in Spring Valley. Last year, the grass on the slopes was removed, and without grass, it is negatively affecting wildlife and migratory and residential birds and other wildlife in this area.

ERIC JENG (Executive Director, One APIA Nevada):
One APIA Nevada stands for Asian Pacific Islander Americans. One of my college youth fellows, Ericka Estacio, submitted her support testimony (Exhibit K). It is great with her personal story and why we should support S.B. 143. In the end, I just want to say thank you to Senator Nguyen for proposing this bill and to invest in studying water conservation. We urge your support.

ROBERT COACHE:
I am a former deputy state engineer with Nevada, and I have over four decades of experience in water resources in both public and private sectors. I am here to represent myself in support of S.B. 143.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority is comprised of seven different agencies in the Clark County region with each agency appointing one representative to the SNWA board. Although the SNWA board provides board representation, the SNWA executive team is the same as the executive team in LVVWD which is the municipal water purveyor for the City of Las Vegas proper, which results in a lack of oversight regarding the actions of LVVWD.

For example, you have heard it already today, but while all residents of the Las Vegas Valley and surrounding areas rely on the same allocation of water from the Colorado River, ratepayers within the LVVWD service area are subjected to disproportionately high fees compared to ratepayers in other agencies that draw from the same water source.

I fully endorsed the evaluation, review, and subsequent oversight and transparency of water conservation efforts in the Las Vegas Valley concerning the use of water from the Colorado River.

DEON BLANEY:
I am a native Las Vegan, and I fully support S.B. 143. I want to thank the committee for allowing us to speak today and specifically wanted to thank the people who presented and Senator Nguyen for bringing this bill forward.

I am very concerned about recent laws. The number of trees being lost throughout the Las Vegas Valley is disturbing on many levels. I also want to share a personal story that happened to a friend of ours who was driving down Fort Apache Road. A dead tree, where the grass had been removed underneath

the tree, fell on her car and nearly killed her and her daughter, and the car was totaled. It was quite scary.

I live in an older community where there's still some natural turf. We have trees, and we have applied for a waiver to keep some of this grass. We were denied and told that some of the grass on the slope had to be removed. Those areas have trees that provide shade. We were also denied some smaller areas where families gather every evening with their children, and it is functional turf. I am very upset about that.

Our board is getting ready to spend over $120,000 from our reserve to make some of these so-called necessary conversions. That will not even accommodate all of what Southern Nevada Water Authority wants us to take out. It will completely deplete our reserves.

There was no time for the board to budget for this. I am concerned on many levels for the future of my community, my city, Las Vegas and my children and my grandchildren who are third generation. I feel like the habitability of Las Vegas is being jeopardized.

I also feel like time is of the essence. We do not have a lot of time. I would like to see if we could get this fast-tracked.

LISA ORTEGA:
I am a master arborist in Nevada, and I have been working with trees for the last 25 years. I am wondering, can there be exceptions for trees? Can there be exceptions for large canopies? Our trees are dying, and anything we could do to keep that canopy is absolute music to my ears.

Many times, as you probably know, trees and grass typically do not make the transition. Roots were torn off within the first foot, and we are losing trees at a rate, in my career, like I have never seen. Our ash and pine are about 25 percent of our population of trees. They are dying all along the Las Vegas Valley.

Hotter temperatures are leading to more deaths, and heat-related sicknesses are filling our hospitals. I am sure you know of those things with the Health District.

I think it would be wonderful to figure out a way to not tear out all the turf where we have very large populations of trees. These are keeping the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) map green. I worry that these changes will move those green spots on the RTC map to red.

I am with Nevada Plants, and we're planting trees like crazy, but we are talking five to six years to even get any kind of a nice shade from those. I am just worrying about constituents and about folks in the interim. So, if there's anything you can do to help save trees in turf grass as an exception, I am all about that and I appreciate it.

ROBERT HILLSON:
If we hope to fight the urban heat island effect in any meaningful way, we must allow grass to remain under mature trees and on slopes. More than 500 deaths were registered last summer with heat as a major factor in each of these events. My current property supports 177 trees on 1.25 acres which, combined with the grass and bushes through the natural process of photosynthesis, converts CO2 into H2O and oxygen. If we care about our severely polluted air, we have to support the retention of plants.

Section 10 in Clark County where I reside is surrounded by four urban highways—Rainbow, Desert Inn, Sahara and Buffalo—with multiple lanes and cars traveling at 50 to 55 miles an hour during rush hour, requiring multiple light cycles to clear the lights at Rainbow and Desert Inn plus Spring Mountain.

In the past few years, mainly because we have minimum lot sizes in section 10 of one-half acre, we have seen many properties allow their beautiful mature trees to die because the property owners simply could not afford to water them.

Asking us to pull out our grass to replace it with desert landscaping and artificial turf massively increases the amount of plastic in our environment. Recent research shows that those of us greater than 50 years of age have the equivalent of approximately one plastic spoon accumulated in our brains—and remember we recreated on natural grass. Our offspring can be expected to have much more in their brains.

Remember also that these artificial fields obtain summer temperatures well above 150 degrees which requires us to then water it to cool it to avoid

second-degree burns and to remove all the contaminants. After less than a decade, they are sent to already at-capacity landfills to further contaminate our environment.

As a medical doctor, the other consideration is the ground-up car tires used to soften the impact on players; sadly, if you watch closely every time you see a player hit the artificial turf, you see a puff. I want to make sure everybody recognizes when you play on these fields, fine particles of the ground-up rubber tires are ingested by people. We now have a recognized number of cases of lung cancer frequently appearing in young high school and college soccer goalies which are the direct result of this inhalation.

AL LASSO:
I just want to echo the other people who called in support of S.B. 143. I think it is nice to hear our Legislature is starting to address the draconian water rules that have been put in place in Nevada, and I thank Senator Nguyen for doing so. I hope there are more hearings like this to address some of the other issues that the water district has burdened us with.

CYRUS HOJJATY (Strong Towns Las Vegas):
I am the team leader of the Las Vegas local chapter of Strong Towns urban planning organization. We're fighting against urban heat island effect. This bill will help a lot. Las Vegas is the fastest warming city. Thank you so much for this opportunity, and please get the job done.

JOHN RANDO:
I would like to testify in favor of this bill. It reminds me of the old joke—what do you call 1,000 lawyers at the bottom of the ocean? A good start. I think this is going to be a really, really good start.

ANDREW BELANGER (Director of Public Services, Las Vegas Valley Water District; Southern Nevada Water Authority; Springs Preserve):
We appreciate the opportunity to speak on S.B. 143. I want to thank the sponsor of this bill for her work on this issue and for her dogged support of her constituents and the work they do. We appreciate the reason for the bill and why it is here. We support the provisions of this bill. We think it makes sense to have the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources review water conservation efforts and provide that information to the next legislative session

if they have recommendations. We think it makes sense for that committee to look at that.

I will note, and Mr. Pepper Sturm might remember this from 2003, but then-Senator Mark Amodei had a bill to put the water authority under the oversight of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands. That has worked well. It has given an opportunity for us to provide information to the Legislature for much of the last 22 years. That has worked, but that committee is now focused mostly on rural issues. We did our last presentation to that committee in Schurz, Nevada, and it did not give an opportunity for people to show up in Las Vegas, Reno or Carson City and provide comment. So having the Interim Committee do this will help make sure there's accessibility for people who want to provide comment.

The study by NDEP will help provide a source of information that is unbiased and allow for good recommendations on what the State wants to do about artificial turf. I will note that Southern Nevada has been in a drought and aridification for much of the last 25 years. We have worked hard to make sure the community's water supply is there for its current and future residents. We will want to make sure the rationale for why we have done things is presented to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources so it can have that information, and it can make informed choices about what we did and why we did it.

SENATOR NGUYEN:
I appreciate the time. I am surprised by the support of this bill, but I think that is telling the real issue that you have. A lot of people are passionate about protecting their community, the tree canopies and their landscaping that is not just there for decorative purposes but also provides cleaner air and safer places for their kids to play in. It is a part of our community that needs to be considered in any policies we make regarding everything from water rates to artificial turf.

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:
Thank you very much for this timely presentation on the bill. Certainly down in Southern Nevada, we face so many challenges with the heat island effect, air pollution and our drought and trying to balance everything.

We'll close the hearing on S.B. 143, and before we open the next hearing, I received a bill draft request (BDR).

BILL DRAFT REQUEST R-1163: Declares April 2025 as Financial Literacy Month. (Later introduced as Senate Concurrent Resolution 4.)

SENATOR DALY MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR R-1163.

SENATOR KRASNER SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

* * * * *

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:
I would like to open the hearing on S.B. 414.

SENATE BILL 414: Revises provisions relating to public office. (BDR 23-1111)

SENATOR MELANIE SCHEIBLE (Senatorial District No. 9):
Senate Bill 414 does a couple of different things intended to promote fairness and transparency in our government. The first section of S.B. 414 is intended to close what I would describe as a loophole. Under NRS, every elected official is required to disclose their financial interests in any private companies, but that is capped at a portion of the stocks and amount of the company that is greater than 1 percent of the business.

There are many large multibillion-dollar corporations that people own stock in, and they may own significant amounts of stock in the order of tens of thousands of dollars or even millions of dollars' worth in a company, but it still might not rise to the level of being 1 percent of that company. So, what S.B. 414 purports to do is to create a cap or minimum to say that if you have stock that is worth $5,000 or more in any particular company, you must disclose that you have a financial interest in that company.

I think this also brings fairness to the law because today we have this kind of disproportionate enforcement where you might own 100 percent of your small family business that is only worth tens of thousands of dollars, maybe $100,000. You have to disclose that, whereas somebody else who's in a

similarly situated position in terms of being an elected official might have millions of dollars invested in another company that they do not have to disclose simply because the company is so large. This puts everybody on a fair playing field by saying whether it is more than 1 percent of the company or more than $5,000 worth of stock in the company, you have to disclose that.

The second thing that S.B. 414 does is provide transparency for inaugural committees. I am sure you are familiar with inaugural committees, but I want to make sure we are being clear on the record about what we are talking about. When our Constitutional Officers are elected in Nevada, there is a period of time between when they are actually elected in November and when they take office in January in which they are preparing to take over their offices, getting things ready to become the new Governor, the new Lieutenant Governor, the new State Controller. During that time, Constitutional Officers can open inaugural committees.

Inaugural committees function in a kind of gray area right now. The purpose of S.B. 414 is to bring them into the fold and ensure we have transparency when it comes to inaugural committees and they are treated more like campaign committees or PACs, political action committees.

Senate Bill 414 says any inaugural committee will be subject to the same reporting requirements as a candidate or a political action committee, wherein it must disclose contributions made in excess of $1,000, whether it is a single contribution or the accumulation of contributions over $1,000, as well as report any expenditures over $1,000.

Those reports would have to be made quarterly as they are for candidates, and there would be an annual renewal of their registration with the Secretary of State. The reason we are trying to do this in S.B. 414 is because inaugural committees have kind of fallen through the cracks. They've become a tool that could be utilized to make political expenditures or expenditures that would otherwise be considered political, except they are not coming from a campaign committee bank account or from a PAC bank account.

However, inaugural committees are not limited in the types of work they do. While we might normally think of an inaugural committee as being propped up and funded in order to buy tablecloths for an inaugural ball or to hire a DJ for an inauguration party, there's nothing that stops a candidate from using their

inaugural committee to run ads against an opponent, to do research on an opponent, to do outreach to constituents or potential voters. If people are going to be utilizing inaugural committees for these purposes, it is only fair to us as voters that we are able to understand where that money is coming from and where that money is going.

That is what the thrust of sections 3 through 6 of the bill do. Then the rest of the bill makes conforming changes throughout NRS to include inaugural committees in the laws that affect political action committees and campaign committees.

SENATOR DALY:
I understand the value of $5,000, so hopefully there'll be some regulation or some more stuff on that. For me, I don't have a great deal of money, but we have personal investments and it is managed by ... . I would not know if we had $5,000 or more in any one particular company, and that may change. Maybe I went over for a little bit and then I came back down. I don't know. So you are anticipating this applying to if you have a money guy and he is doing your thing that there's ... . How much knowledge do we have to have and when? Because to me it is just going to be a big question to ask him once a year, I guess.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
I absolutely understand your question, and I think you started it by asking if there would be regulations. That would be my assumption. We have a choice in this building to be especially prescriptive or to be more general when we bring forward legislation. I chose in this instance to be more general and allow for regulations to fill in the gaps to say, to your point, that some disclosure is necessary. It should be related to the amount of knowledge a candidate has. So, for example, if you are invested in mutual funds, it is my intention with the legislation, that you would be able to list those mutual funds. You would not have to break out all of the different companies that are part of that fund. You'd be able to simply list the mutual fund.

SENATOR DALY:
I just know, thinking back to when I still worked at the union, there were some provisions in federal law and various things on things that we had to disclose as union members on our Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act forms. They had exclusions for some of that stuff, if you own some of this stuff, but if it was part of a managed portfolio, they did not. I was just curious how that

was going to work out because it would be a new thing for me that we would have to do. I am not saying that is a bad thing either. I understand the disclosure on that.

In section 4, we are defining inaugural committee. So how would I get around that, by just not calling it an inaugural committee? You mentioned a time period, but they can continue to take contributions after that time period. It is not like it is narrowed down to just between Election Day and when they actually take office. Everybody's thinking of the inaugural committees and the parties and the balls and all that kind of stuff. But you mentioned all the other things. Did we capture a broad enough definition? What are some of the activities they might do that we need to capture in that definition?

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
I am always open to amendments and further conversations. Part of the reason for bringing the bill was that it was difficult to pin down what makes an inaugural committee an inaugural committee. To your point, it does not have to be founded after an election. It does not have to be closed after inauguration. By making the purpose of it to be any committee making expenditures for the inauguration of a Constitutional Officer, I am hoping we would not have people getting around it by calling it a welcoming committee or an introduction committee. If the committee is also participating in those preinauguration activities and expending money in anticipation of a Constitutional Officer's inauguration, then it would be an inaugural committee.

SENATOR DALY:
It seems to me some of the activities you said they might be doing—advocating, advertising, putting out political campaigns—would already be captured in the definitions of what a political action committee can and can't and should and shouldn't be doing. If they are doing those things and not already reporting as a political action committee, I think those would be actionable violations of the law. But if they are skirting around this, I agree. I do not have any suggested language. I just was thinking, can we make it broader?

When I had a bill two years ago on the false electors and I said, "Hey, you can't do this," the Attorney General's Office said, "What are the acts we are trying to stop them from doing?" That is when they defined it. It is turning in the certificate to the Secretary of State, sending the document to the archives building and those types of things. Those are the actions we are trying to

capture. That is the only thing I was thinking in the definition—what are the acts that we want to capture? Some of it is already covered in law, and they are potentially violating anyway.

SENATOR KRASNER:
My concern is just the same as Senator Daly brought up about the $5,000. When you have somebody investing money for you, it changes daily. You do not know how much of one stock you have today, and it could change tomorrow. Then if you report that, it's wrong and then it's a lie. I see some real concerns with that.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE:
I think going back to my previous answer, there is a balance to be struck. I think it could be further fleshed out in code or in regulations. It is also valuable to know that your elected officials or your candidates are investing their money somewhere. Even if it is a mutual fund or a managed portfolio, I think we can strike a balance between requiring the disclosure of the existence of that portfolio and whatever guidelines you have given to your financial manager in order to ensure voters have adequate information about an individual who might be serving and his or her financial interests.

There is room there for reasonable regulations and codes to be written that would address both the reality of people utilizing financial advisors and not knowing to the penny where all of their money is invested but balancing that with people making conscious decisions about where they put their money and what types of funds they put their money in.

There are still those candidates and those elected officials who are simply buying stock in one particular company. I think voters have a right to know if their elected official or the candidate who's asking for their vote has invested more than $5,000 in one particular company. I think we deserve to know that.

ANAHIT BAGHSHETSYAN (Research Assistant, Nevada Policy):
Nevada Policy supports S.B. 414. We see it as a critical step toward strengthening transparency and accountability, which is the most important link between the public and the government. Senate Bill 414 ensures that voters have a clear picture of potential conflicts of interest when it comes to their elected officials.

The requirement to disclose business holdings not only based on stock percentage but also the monetary threshold closes the loophole Senator Scheible mentioned earlier. Financial disclosure laws in Nevada would come much more in line with the best practices of governmental accountability if the legislation were passed.

It also addresses the gap, again as Senator Scheible mentioned, of the campaign finance laws with inaugural committees, and by banning foreign contributions to inaugural committees, it ensures prevention of any foreign oversight and foreign power pools in the Nevada inaugural committees.

It is a simple fix to a very common problem that would increase public trust in our governmental system. For those reasons, we urge you to support the legislation. I have also submitted written testimony (Exhibit L) supporting S.B. 414.

CYRUS HOJJATY:
It is a good bill. There's a lot of good protection. It is very important. I will ditto the previous commentator. Ironically, we are bringing this bill while the stock market crashed today.

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:
I have received a letter (Exhibit M) from One APIA Nevada supporting S.B. 414. I will close the hearing on S.B. 414, and I would like to pass the gavel back to Vice Chair Daly.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
We will open the hearing on S.B. 422.

SENATE BILL 422: Revises provisions relating to voting. (BDR 24-954)

SENATOR JAMES OHRENSCHALL (Senatorial District No. 21):
Senate Bill 422 has to do with registering to vote either on Election Day or during the period of early voting and trying to make sure there are no obstacles standing in your way if you or someone who is qualified wants to vote.

Senate Bill 422 specifies certain requirements for proof of identity and residency for persons registering to vote during the early voting period or on Election Day. Under this bill, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is required to establish

extended hours just prior to the election to accommodate persons obtaining a driver's license or a Nevada identification card.

As you are all familiar, elections and the right to vote are critical to our democracy and represent the core foundations of our free society. Certainly, it is one of the big themes our committee looks at all session. The measure before you today is brought forward with the intent to continue to provide voting access to citizens in our State.

Senate Bill 422 deals with same-day voter registration. This is the process by which an eligible Nevada voter can register to vote or update their voter information at a polling location during early voting or on Election Day. The voter must then immediately cast their ballot when participating in same-day voter registration.

Some of the reasons why people participate in same-day voter registration include: a recent address change—the rate that people move within Nevada is relatively high; perhaps, they've had a legal name change; maybe they got married, divorced or had some other type of legal name change; someone may become a United States citizen after the close of the voter registration deadline or some may have recently moved from another state.

According to the DMV driver's license surrender data in 2023, approximately 90,000 new Nevadans surrendered their out-of-state driver's license or identification in exchange for a Nevada license or Nevada identification card.

According to the Secretary of State's election website, for the 2024 general election, over 27,488 Nevadans used same-day voter registration throughout the State. Of those 27,488 same-day registrants from the 2024 general election, 7,870 registered with the Democratic Party, 10,566 registered with the Republican Party, and the remainder were in the other category. Excluding online same-day registration, 16,099 of those new registrants were brand-new voters and 1,546 were updating existing registration information.

In short, S.B. 422 deals with two components. First, it specifies the kind of documents that would satisfy proof of identity and proof of residency. Second, it asks for extended hours from the DMV in our State's two largest counties in terms of population, Clark County and Washoe County. This would allow people

who do not have a Nevada driver's license or Nevada identification card to get one so they can participate and vote.

Senate Bill 422 requires a person to provide a driver's license or an identification card issued by the Nevada DMV, another state, the District of Columbia or a territory of the United States or a tribal identification card as proof of identity for purposes of registering to vote in person during the period for early voting or Election Day. If such proof of identity was not issued by the DMV or does not include the person's current residential address, the person must also provide proof of residency. The bill also allows original electronic or certified copies of certain documents not more than 60 days old to establish proof of residency.

If a person who appears to vote does not have the required driver's license, identification card or social security number, then the person is authorized to cast a provisional ballot upon completion of a written affirmation. The bill also requires the DMV in counties with a population of 100,000 or more, currently Clark and Washoe Counties, to establish extended hours of operation for the two weeks immediately preceding the deadline to register to vote by mail and for six days following the day of certain elections, and allows a person during those same time periods to obtain or renew a driver's license or ID card without an appointment.

EMILY PERSAUD-ZAMORA (Executive Director, Silver State Voices; Let Nevadans Vote Coalition):

We're really excited to present this legislation because it updates one of our favorite policies, same-day voter registration, commonly referred to as SDR. My organization leads a nonpartisan election protection program which includes a phone hotline and poll monitor program during the election season.

Through this work, we help voters of all political parties throughout the entirety of Nevada navigate the election process to cast their ballots. Same-day voter registration was established in 2019 through the passage of A.B. No. 345 of the 80th Session sponsored by then-Speaker Jason Frierson. Since then, we have seen SDR work for thousands of Nevadans across all political parties. As the Senator mentioned, there are a variety of different reasons why folks use SDR.

However, every election cycle SDR is also the number one topic our election protection program receives questions about. We believe that SDR can be strengthened to work better for Nevada voters. That is our goal with S.B. 422.

So how does SDR work? And how does S.B. 422 factor? Let's say a voter is at a polling location and needs to register to vote or update their information. The election worker says "Great. Please show me your ID." The ID the voter needs to provide must be a current, valid, unexpired driver's license or ID issued by the Nevada DMV. The license or ID must also have the voter's current address. That license or ID serves as proof of identity and residency.

If the voter's license or ID meets those two requirements, the voter is good to go and can vote immediately at that polling location. The SDR voter will technically be voting via a provisional ballot, but it will count as soon as their registration is verified. If the voter's ID is current and valid from the Nevada DMV but does not have the voter's current address per A.B. No. 345 of the 80th Session, the voter will have to show proof of residence such as a utility bill.

In the scenario in which an SDR voter does not have a current and valid license or ID from the Nevada DMV, that's where it gets tricky. That is what S.B. 422 aims to address. There are a couple of different scenarios we frequently see in the field and have been asked about when it comes to SDR, and we just want to illustrate those for the committee.

If the voter has a Nevada license or ID with their current address but it is expired, the voter may use an interim document from the DMV. This is an existing policy originating from A.B. No. 345 of the 80th session. What does that look like in practice? If a voter wants to do SDR during early voting or on Election Day but does not realize their ID has expired, they can go to the DMV to renew their license and ID. In that interaction, they are given an interim document serving as their license/ID until they receive their card in the mail. That interim document is acceptable for SDR.

We want to take a moment to salute the DMV. In the last two elections, it has offered specific hours for walk-in registration for new Nevada residents in Reno, Henderson and Las Vegas. It has extended its hours since 2020. However, this is at the discretion of the DMV and is not due to NRS obligations.

Currently, all of the Southern Nevada DMV locations are open from Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Saturday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Reno DMV also has the same hours of operation. One thing we have seen though is, unfortunately, since this is not statute, it is just something that the DMV decides to do at times, it is not really taught across the board. We actually had multiple reports to our election protection hotline of folks going specifically to the Flamingo location and saying, "Hey, you know, I saw the post online from the DMV, and I want to go ahead get an ID so I can participate in same-day voter registration", and they were told by team members at the DMV, "We do not know what you are talking about. That's not a policy we have." We see passing this as a statute gives the opportunity for the DMV to train their employees so there's not any issue of miscommunication or anything moving forward.

I just also want to note one particular story I had with the election protection hotline. Last year, a dear friend of mine called our hotline. She works at a community center, and an elderly man came in. He is a former Nye County resident who moved to Clark County and lives in a senior home. This is something we see very often. Many times, voters move from one county to another in the State and do not realize they must update their voter registration. They may not realize that until it is time for them to actually vote. Through this, we were able to make sure we got the gentleman the assistance he needed. But sometimes, folks may not realize this until it is the very last minute, maybe the last day of early vote or Election Day, and being able to have a policy like this really would assist voters like this veteran.

In conclusion, same-day voter registration is an amazing policy. It has allowed thousands of voters from Republicans to Democrats to nonpartisans and everything else in between to participate in Nevada's democracy; they would not have if there was not a policy like SDR. We know it can be even better and more accessible. We thank the Senator for bringing forward this policy. It does not change the current circumstances of SDR, it just makes it better.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
I read through the provisions of the bill. It seems pretty straightforward and in order. I think all of those contingencies and scenarios have been addressed. People cast their provisional ballot, and then they have to get the rest of the verification by that next Friday; and then the DMV being open so they can get that license. As I said, all appears to be in order.

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:
I want to echo what Ms. Persaud-Zamora said. I do appreciate all the efforts the DMV has made to try to accommodate folks who need to make that update.

There is an amendment (Exhibit N) proposed by Clark County. I believe Clark County is going to come up and talk a little bit about the amendment.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
Is it your amendment or Clark County's?

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:
I believe it was submitted by Clark County.

ASHLEY KENNEDY (Clark County):
We did offer a conceptual amendment, Exhibit N, to the Senator for consideration. The amendment does not address same-day voter registration, but because it was in line with the efforts of the bill, we thought it was an appropriate suggestion.

Currently, for automatic voter registration, if you are updating your address for your driver's license at the DMV, you will automatically be reregistered with your new address. The deadline for automatic voter registration is 28 days before the election, which is the same day as registering to vote by mail. The amendment will update that deadline. So rather than it being 28 days before the election, it will be 13 days before the election.

Hopefully, this means we will have fewer provisional ballots. That means if you register to vote 13 days before the election, you'll still be able to have a mail ballot; it will still be considered a regular ballot, and you would not have to submit a provisional ballot. This was an idea of our registrar to modernize, especially with automatic voter registration, and expand access. It does not impact anything related to same-day voter registration.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
You said if they go to the DMV and it is at least 13 days before; I know there's got to be a cutoff somewhere. You said they could still get the mail ballot in that time frame.

MS. KENNEDY:
Yes, in speaking with our registrar just earlier today, that would be the case with this change.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
You're cutting it close because you are in early voting at that time as well.

MS. KENNEDY:
Yes, and that is why we landed on the 13 days because it is, to your point, cutting a little bit close. So, we thought 13 days was fair.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
I am fine, and I see that. But it is under your name, Senator Ohrenschall, as the proposed amendment on NELIS, but that is okay.

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:
It's not on NELIS.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
It is. It's just under your name.

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:
Okay. All right. Well, I definitely support the amendment, and I believe it will actually expand accessibility from what I have heard from our Clark County clerk and registrar.

MS. BAGHSHETSYAN:
Nevada Policy supports S.B. 422. It is an important measure that would enhance election integrity and ensure voter access. This is the first step to establish clear and consistent voter ID requirements. As a result, Nevada will strengthen its confidence in the integrity of our elections. Furthermore, with the passage of A.B. No. 422 of the 81st Session and the full implementation of voter registration and election management solution systems underway, the bill would allow clear and more precise data points when it comes to curing provisional ballots and resolving real-time issues during the elections.

Importantly, S.B. 422 would not place an undue burden on voters; rather, it would simply expand access by requiring longer working hours for DMV offices. This would be a great accommodation for working Nevadans who otherwise will

not have enough time to go to the DMV and ensure they have up-to-date voter IDs and by allowing time until Friday to cap the provisional ballot curing procedures. This would be a great cure for a rather big problem we have been facing election after election. So, for those reasons, we would love to urge the committee to support the legislation. I have submitted a written statement (Exhibit O) supporting S.B. 422.

MR. JENG:
One APIA Nevada advocates for the fast growing Asian American and Pacific Islander Community. I believe my colleague already sent in a support statement (Exhibit P) for S.B. 422. So, I just want to say ditto and thank the sponsor and presenter for this bill.

JENNIFER WILLETT (Senior Campaign Manager, All Voting is Local):
All Voting is Local Action Nevada is an organization that advocates for policies and legislative priorities that expand voter access. We strongly support S.B. 422, a commonsense bill that meets the needs of thousands of voters, especially those who are new Nevadans, first-time voters and those who have recently moved and decided to vote in the days or weeks right before Election Day.

As an election protection volunteer, by far, the most frequent question I am asked is how to register same day with an out-of-state ID. This is not surprising, as Emily went over, as Nevada is one of the most transient states in the country due to our State's economy, high military presence and newly relocated retirees.

I explain our State's laws and direct them to the DMV for a Nevada ID, but it is not uncommon for them actually to come back and tell me that all of the appointments are booked. Obviously, this creates significant frustration for people who are eager to be civically engaged and vote.

We believe S.B. 422 would address these issues by requiring the DMV to offer extended hours. When voter registration is accessible, more people are likely to vote, leading to elections that are more representative of the entire population, not just those with the knowledge and time to navigate the registration process. Please vote yes on S.B. 422, and thank you for your time.

KAYLAH MAESE (Civil Rights Analyst, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada):
The American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada is also a member of the Let Nevadans Vote Coalition. We proudly support S.B. 422, and we thank Senator Ohrenschall for bringing the bill forward.

ESMERALDA VAZQUEZ (Campaign Legal Center):
Campaign Legal Center (CLC) supports S.B. 422 to ensure broader access to the same-day registration process and to the identification needed to cast a ballot in Nevada. As a nonpartisan election reform organization, CLC believes that thoughtful expansion of this policy that balances both access and security will help ensure that a greater number of eligible voters will have the opportunity to participate in the electoral process despite circumstances that may have prevented them from obtaining a Nevada's driver's license or ID before Election Day. This bill does exactly that.

Requiring the DMV to be more available on weekends and for extended hours for the purpose of issuing and renewing identifications during the critical election period will limit long lines and other challenges voters currently face to obtain the needed documentation. Taken together, the provisions in this bill help ensure that voters are not being cut off from the political process simply because they lack specific Nevada identification on Election Day.

Cutting down on the number of disenfranchised Nevadans is a worthwhile and achievable goal that this bill helps accomplish.

PAULA LUNA (Deputy Director, Battle Born Progress):
I am calling in support of S.B. 422. Senate Bill 422 would facilitate access to the ballot box and therefore should be supported. We would also like to echo the comments made by the bill's presenters and supporting testimony. We thank Senator Ohrenschall for bringing this important legislation forward.

BRI SCHMIDT (Silver State Equality):
Silver State Equality is Nevada's statewide LGBTQ+ civil rights organization. We are in support of S.B. 422 because it will increase voter participation, particularly for populations that often experience the most obstacles in accessing the democratic process, and ditto what everybody else has said.

WILLIAM MOORE (Nevada Civic Engagement Director, Mi Familia en Acción):
I am testifying in support of S.B. 422. Mi Familia en Acción is a civic engagement organization and a proud member of the Let Nevadans Vote Coalition. Latinas are passionate about participating in our democracy, particularly about voting in elections. We're a community that believes in voting as it's a path to build greater opportunity for our community. It will also allow us to have our voices heard at the ballot box at a critical time in our country.

Our community often works in jobs that are hard to take time off from, and S.B. 422 would help ensure Latino voters are able to vote on Election Day. We believe our community needs this expansion of the same-day voter registration process.

Senate Bill 422 is well-rounded legislation that emphasizes fully utilizing our resources for our community. Thank you for sponsoring this bill, and we recommend the committee supports S.B. 422.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
The committee has received four letters (Exhibit Q) supporting S.B. 422.

LORENA BIASSOTTI:
I was here earlier to speak on another bill, but when I came across this one, I saw that we are yet again tinkering with voter laws. It makes me wonder, is it that we just did not like the outcome of the fair presidential election? I could not help but notice the intent is to remove "obstacles" by allowing citizens to register to vote using copies of documents if need be.

Is this bill something that would block illegal aliens from voting, or would it facilitate it? It seems pretty obvious, especially when it comes at a time when the Biden Administration has allowed millions of illegals from all over the world to pour into our country. I wonder who illegals would vote for when given the opportunity with bills like S.B. 422.

Lastly, I personally take offense to the notion that this would help the Latino community—not the legal ones. We know very well how to register to vote. We do not need this ever-expanding window to allow us to register to vote because informed voters, informed citizens know how to register to vote ahead of time.

LESLIE QUINN:
I oppose S.B. 422. I read an AI overview that defines clutter as a condition of disorder, a collection of items strewn about in a disorganized fashion that can negatively impact mental health and productivity. Merriam-Webster defines it as a crowded or confused massive collection. Clutter certainly describes S.B. 422.

An elector, according to Nevada law, is a citizen of the United States of the age of 18 and upwards who shall have actually resided in the State six months and in the district or county 30 days next preceding any election. And yet the bill simply clutters that Nevada law. It interjects anyone from anywhere into Nevada's election process, leaving our county clerks with the job of having to determine if their votes even counted after the election is already over.

Unfortunately, Nevada's provisional ballot legislation is also cluttered. A provisional ballot by law can't even be opened until the day after the election. Election legislation's purpose is to support the people's election process, not to clutter it up. Please put forth bills for voting with paper ballots, voting on the same day, counting voting ballots on the same day as voting day and stamping legal U.S. citizen on all driver's licenses. This will save Nevadans hundreds of thousands of tax dollars and bring back trust in voting. Please oppose S.B. 422.

JANINE HANSEN (State Chairman, Independent American Party):
We have often heard from the chair of this committee how there was no election fraud in the past. I would submit that this bill will contribute to citizens' distrust of the election system. No wonder people are concerned about the election process with things like this bill when you can have people with out-of-state driver's licenses registering to vote. If they do not have any kind of ID, they can just swear out an affidavit and get a provisional ballot which is not finalized until the Friday after the election. It will also cost the DMV more money.

I think this is a huge problem for people's view of the elections. On April 2, 2025, Elon Musk revealed that millions of illegals are receiving driver's licenses, and many are voting. Antonio Gracias said that they had unveiled a shocking chart. A dramatic spike of social security numbers issued to noncitizens soaring from 270,000 in 2021 to 2.1 million in 2024. It is almost 5 million noncitizens now embedded in the system collecting benefits, draining taxpayer dollars and most alarmingly infiltrating the voter rolls.

They said they stumbled on this by accident, but we found 1.3 million already in Medicare and a total of 5.5 million in those benefit programs. They actually just took a sample and looked at the voter registration records, and they found people registered to vote who were illegal and who also voted during the last election. This is a huge concern to American citizens who feel their votes are becoming meaningless when you have people who should not be voting. This bill contributes to their concerns, and so we oppose it.

LYNN CHAPMAN (Vice President, Nevada Families for Freedom):
We too are very concerned about this bill—driver's licenses from another state. We have to worry about fake IDs and identity theft, which is terrible nowadays, to prove a person's identity—then to have a utility bill to prove their residency.

Well, back in 2008 before the primary, I noticed that I had not received a bill from NV Energy, and I was talking to my husband about it; my daughter came in, she worked for the grocery store, and she took care of the bill. She was in nonfoods and took care of bills that people wanted to pay. She said, "Well, mom, there are at least 50 people in the last week that have come in and said the same thing—they had not received their bill." So, when I called NV Energy, they said, "Oh, you called us, and we changed your address," which was very alarming.

So, in the 2009 Legislative Session, in this room for Legislative Operations and Elections, I reported this information, and Senator Bill Raggio was very concerned and listened to me, and I talked to him about it. I do not know what he ever did about it, but I know that he was concerned and said he'd take care of things. But there were many people who had problems with their addresses being changed.

Also, concerning the provisional ballots—well, people getting another driver's license, they have till 5:00 p.m. Friday after the election to produce a driver's license. I was wondering how long people have to wait to find out the outcome of elections.

And motor vehicles staying open on Sundays and Saturdays—the DMV staying open costs a lot of money to do that. I think people should be a little bit more responsible in getting things done in time like the rest of the hundreds of thousands of people in this State. People do not feel comfortable with the way things are going with the elections. We need to do something different.

ELLEN GIFFORD:
Please note that when there was Election Day and not election month, voters were mature, responsible people who knew they needed to be registered to vote and came prepared. Same-day registration simply causes more confusion and fraud in our elections and never should have been allowed in our elections. I oppose this bill.

MR. LASSO:
First, I want to say I have great respect for the important work all the Senate committees do. And while I may not always agree with every decision made, I fully recognize the weight of your responsibilities and the challenges you face in making them.

This bill is an example of government overkill by far. The handful of lazy people, who can't get registered in time to vote when we have early voting for a month, that are going to be affected by this bill is so minimal that to keep the DMV open for days on weekends doesn't make sense to spend that kind of money.

Why don’t you keep it open for people who are actually residents of Nevada when we can't make an appointment for three months? This bill will allow out-of-state IDs which could create opportunities for voter fraud as individuals who are not residents could attempt to vote in the election when they are not eligible. A driver's license from another state does not prove residency in Nevada and neither does a power bill. Accepting another state's ID or signed affidavit could undermine our State's election laws.

Also, election officials may have difficulty verifying out-of-state licenses or affidavits on Election Day, leading to administrative complications and delays. We already have some of the longest delays ever to get our results.

There's potential for duplicate voting. A person with an out-of-state ID may have already voted in their home state, raising concerns about double voting. Signed affidavits rely on self-attestation which could be more susceptible to fraudulent claims. There's a law that says if you are a resident of this state you have to get your driver's license within 30 days. I think we follow that law, and we allow the law-abiding citizens to vote and the others who could not vote in time will just have to vote in the next election. I can't imagine spending this kind of money. I ask you to vote no on S.B. 422 for the handful of people this will affect.

YOLANDA KNAAK:
I am 100 percent opposed to S.B. 422. Please do not allow people with out-of-state driver's licenses to come and vote with a provisional ballot. I live in Incline Village, four miles from California. I worked the polls on Election Day. We had a lot of people coming with their California driver's licenses and voting here in Incline Village on a provisional ballot.

As an election worker, it is very time-consuming. Plus, ballots need to be counted on Election Day, not five days later when these people come with their Nevada driver's licenses. I would not be surprised that a lot of them did not come. Plus, because you are getting a Nevada driver's license does not mean you are a citizen. So please vote no on S.B. 422. Noncitizen ballots must not be counted.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
The committee has received four letters (Exhibit R) opposing S.B. 422.

SEAN SEVER (Deputy Administrator, Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles):
We are neutral on S.B. 422. However, we have a fiscal note on the bill. I wanted to thank the bill's sponsor for reaching out to us.

The impact here with the DMV is pretty simple. This is overtime pay for our employees. Our employees work 40 hours a week, and if we have to call them in over the weekend or after hours, we need to pay them overtime along with the security guards we need to have on hand. We already do this for people wanting to register to vote at our urban offices two weeks prior to Election Day from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Saturday, without an appointment. In addition, we are open 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Election Day and the day before Election Day. These are for driver's license/ID transactions only.

I think it is also important to point out that the DMV does not register people to vote. If you apply to vote through the DMV, your information is forwarded to the Secretary of State and the appropriate county registrar who complete the actual registration and maintain the voter rolls.

We like to help people get IDs at the DMV. That's our business. We're good at it. Denying people would be opposite of what we do every day. If that happens, let me know. I also wanted to point out we accept walk-in appointments on

Wednesdays. You can get an appointment on Tuesday evenings online for the next day on Wednesday.

SENATOR OHRENSCHALL:
I thank you and the committee for hearing the bill. In response to some of the testimony from some of the opposition, we heard the term illegal thrown about quite a bit. You know, I certainly do not believe that any people are illegal. Certainly, we have undocumented persons in our country, and we have noncitizens. There's nothing in S.B. 422 that would facilitate noncitizens voting or voter fraud. There's nothing in this bill that would facilitate that.

We have had statements from our Republican Secretary of State, Barbara Cegavske, and our now current Democratic Secretary of State, Cisco Aguilar, stating they did not find any significant voter fraud in the State. Looking at the Brennan Center for Justice website, their studies show that voter fraud or instances of noncitizen voting are extremely rare.

But again, I want to reiterate that there's nothing in S.B. 422 that would do anything to facilitate that. If a noncitizen tries to vote or someone tries to vote twice or committed any kind of voter fraud, that is a felony punishable by state law and in many cases by federal law as well.

This bill tries to make some changes to remove obstacles for people who are qualified to vote and who want to participate in same-day voter registration, which is legal in our State, either during the early voting period or on Election Day. Certainly, I believe it's good policy across the board.

VICE CHAIR DALY:
With that, we will close the hearing on S.B. 422.

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:
The last item on our agenda is public comment.

MARK WLASCHIN (Deputy for Elections, Office of the Secretary of State):
I simply wanted to comment. There was a caller earlier that improperly cited the residency requirement for voters in the State. The Nevada Constitution says there's a six-month requirement. Statute clarifies that it is actually 30 days in a county and 10 days in the precinct. It is an important note. I wanted to make sure we got that on the record as well just in case anybody heard that and

wondered or maybe questioned their own ability to register to vote. So, it is not six months, it is 30 days. And if anybody has questions about the residency requirements or other requirements or timelines associated with voting, I certainly encourage them to reach out to the Office of the Secretary of State: Email nvelect@sos.nv.gov or [call] 775-684-5705.

MR. HOJJATY:
I tried to call in the last meeting, but I could not. So just to let you know, maybe I am in a bad data area. So hopefully you can get that fixed or I can do something with my phone. I was opposed to the last bill.

IRIS STONE:
I realize this is public comment. I was in the queue for a couple hours on S.B. 422, and for some reason there was a mix up with the phone. I was going to give you my testimony for S.B. 422, which I oppose.

I would like to describe the two major issues in my view. I would like to describe the first issue with a scenario that could be allowed should S.B. 422 be approved and passed. Someone rents an apartment in Las Vegas 2 1/2 months prior to Election Day in the name of an Arizona resident with a proper Arizona driver's license. This person temporarily moves to Las Vegas, makes sure he or she pays utility bills for two months. On Election Day, he or she votes, brings the utility bill with him or her, and he or she will be allowed to vote. The same scenario applies to people with tribal identification cards from anywhere in the United States. Then a week after the election, the rental contract is canceled, the person returns full time to their Arizona residence. I call this voter-trafficking or better yet voter-harvesting. It sure takes ballot-harvesting to a new level.

The second major issue has to do with a clear mandate from the public as well as Governor Joe Lombardo, requesting for election results to be available by the end of Election Day. However, S.B. 422 allows for provisional votes to be counted six days after the election, not to mention that it lacks transparency. It does not employ a team of two people from different parties to decide whether to cast a vote. The public is not aware as to which elector voted provisionally, and they may be approved or not. The final voter results are not released to the public until seven days after the election.

This will increase the number of provisional votes that Nevada will have to process and increase workload for election workers. During the 2024 general

election, Clark County had approximately 18,500 provisional votes approved and cast out of a total of 19,700. We all know how hard it is to prove malfeasance after the election is certified. I urge you not to support S.B. 422.

JIM DEGRAFFENREID (Nevada Republican Party):
I am Nevada's national committeeman in opposition to S.B. 422 on behalf of the Nevada Republican Party. Since 2020, Nevada has become the laughingstock of the country due to our inability to count ballots in a timely manner, while anyone who visits the casino can attest to our skills in counting chips and cash.

Senate Bill 422 is another attempt to pass S.B. No. 433 [S.B. 443] of the 82nd Session. That bill was vetoed by Governor Joe Lombardo who correctly noted in his veto message that the bill allows for insufficient proof of residency to vote and places the sanctity and security of our elections in jeopardy.

Senate Bill 422 creates further delays in reporting final, accurate, election results by encouraging additional provisional ballots. Provisional ballots which come primarily from same-day voter registrations are already difficult and complex for counties to manage.

This bill needlessly adds further complexity and delay because it is already incredibly easy to register to vote in Nevada. You can register to vote online, in person, automatically at the DMV or at a polling place on Election Day. Once registered, voters have ballots delivered to them free of charge without even asking. It should be easy to vote and hard to cheat.

We particularly object to section 3 which adds an additional six days of special treatment by the DMV at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars, according to the fiscal note. Department of Motor Vehicles voter registration has been an abject failure, wasting significant taxpayer dollars on a flawed system, causing voters to lose their party registration and failing to produce increased participation in elections. This section adds more expensive complexity when most adults already have a driver's license as part of functioning in society. For all of these reasons, we ask you to please vote no on S.B. 422.

CHAIR OHRENSCHALL:
Thank you to all the members, to the public, all the witnesses and everyone for their patience. I know the hour went late. With that, we are adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Suzanne Efford,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Senator James Ohrenschall, 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. 143	C	7	Laura McSwain / Water Fairness Coalition, Inc.	Testimony
S.B. 143	D	7	Stacy Standley, III / Spanish Trail Master Association	Testimony
S.B. 143	E	9	Southern Nevada Arborist Group	Letter
S.B. 143	F	11	Kelly Kopp / Center for Water Efficient Landscaping	Presentation
S.B. 143	G	21	Diane Henry	Support Testimony
S.B. 143	H	22	Diane Henry	Amended Support Testimony
S.B. 143	I	27	Brian Wignall	Support Testimony
S.B. 143	J	27	Julie Wignall	Support
S.B. 143	K	28	Eric Jeng / One APIA Nevada	Support Testimony-Ericka Estacio
S.B. 414	L	38	Anahit Baghshetsyan / Nevada Policy	Support Testimony
S.B. 414	M	38	Senator James Ohrenschall	Support Testimony – One APIA Nevada
S.B. 422	N	43	Senator James Ohrenschall	Clark County Proposed Amendment
S.B. 422	O	45	Anahit Baghshetsyan / Nevada Policy	Support Testimony

S.B. 422	P	45	Eric Jeng / One APIA Nevada	Support Testimony
S.B. 422	Q	47	Senator Skip Daly	Four Support Letters
S.B. 422	R	51	Senator Skip Daly	Four Opposition Letters