

STAFF REPORT

Date: July 27, 2016

To: Mayor and City Council

Thru: Andrew Clinger, City Manager

Subject: H.1. Staff Report (For Possible Action): Resolution No. _____ Resolution in support of the City of Reno participating in discussions related to potential comprehensive federal public lands legislation in order to support economic development, conservation, and recreation in Washoe County.

From: Scott Gilles, Legislative Relations Program Manager

Summary: City Council has been involved in discussions concerning a potential federal public lands bill. The Council and City staff has heard from a broad range of individuals, special interest groups, and local jurisdictions concerning certain federal lands that they feel would be appropriate to leave federal ownership for a diversity of reasons such as economic development, civic purposes and recreational purposes. The Council and City staff has also heard from organizations that have been working towards designating certain federal lands in Washoe County with outstanding natural and scenic qualities as wilderness.

Background: Congress passed the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) in 1998 to provide a means to dispose of unneeded Federal lands, support economic development, and support local conservation and recreation. Through SNMPLA, specified Federal lands are sold to private interests, and the majority of the proceeds are directed to conservation and recreation programs. To date, SNPLMA has distributed over \$2.7 billion to these purposes.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has identified various Federal lands in Washoe County that are no longer needed and should be made available for sale. The sale or exchange of these lands could create economic, recreation and/or conservation opportunities for Washoe County. Through this process, Washoe County could benefit from having additional lands available for economic development, and by potentially creating a new funding source for new parks and trails, recreational improvements, and conservation. It is unclear at this time how much, if it all, a Washoe County federal public lands bill would mirror SNPLMA.

Discussion: During the discussion with the individuals and organizations with interest in a federal public lands bill, it has been clear that what is intended is legislation that will include

both federal lands that are appropriate to transfer out of federal ownership for various economic and civic purposes along with a conservation component that would designate certain lands in Washoe County with special designations such as wilderness.

It is recommended that the Council discuss and adopt this resolution in support of comprehensive federal public lands legislation in order to support economic development, conservation, and recreation in Washoe County, including the following: (1) making federal lands in Washoe County available for economic development opportunities; (2) expanding recreational opportunities in Washoe County by providing land for parks and trails, and by providing land and funding for recreational facilities; (3) preserving opportunities for hiking, hunting, camping, motorized vehicle recreation facilities, and other recreation on public lands; and (4) furthering conservation by designating new wilderness areas and providing funding for habitat restoration and other conservation efforts. Adopting this resolution will indicate to the interested parties that Reno supports this concept and would like to be involved in future and ongoing discussions.

Financial Implications: None at this time.

Legal Implications: None at this time.

Recommendation: Staff recommends Council adopt Resolution No. _____ in support of the City of Reno participating in discussions related to potential comprehensive federal public lands legislation in order to support economic development, conservation, and recreation in Washoe County.

Proposed Motion: I move to adopt Resolution No. _____ in support of the City of Reno participating in discussions related to potential comprehensive federal public lands legislation in order to support economic development, conservation, and recreation in Washoe County.

RESOLUTION NO.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF RENO
PARTICIPATING IN DISCUSSIONS RELATED TO
POTENTIAL COMPREHENSIVE FEDERAL PUBLIC
LANDS LEGISLATION IN ORDER TO SUPPORT
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONSERVATION, AND
RECREATION IN WASHOE COUNTY.**

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Reno has included “Well-Managed Growth” as a strategic priority, and,

WHEREAS, Washoe County is projected to add over 100,000 new residents by 2030, and these new residents will require housing and employment as well as recreational opportunities, and,

WHEREAS, Washoe County contains millions of acres of public lands that provide important recreational opportunities including hiking, camping, horseback riding, off highway vehicle use, hunting, and fishing, and,

WHEREAS, comprehensive public lands legislation could expand recreational opportunities in Washoe County by providing lands for parks and trails, land and funding for recreational facilities, and preserving opportunities for hiking, hunting, camping, and motorized recreation on public lands, and,

WHEREAS, comprehensive public lands legislation addressing recreation, economic development, and conservation has provided important benefits to counties across Nevada, and can provide important benefits to Washoe County; and,

WHEREAS, protected public lands in our region provide Reno’s citizens with recreation opportunities, support our outdoor recreation economy, and are important to our region’s quality of life; and,

WHEREAS, comprehensive public lands legislation would further conservation by designating appropriate wilderness areas and providing funding for habitat restoration and other conservation activities; and,

WHEREAS, the need to support economic development now and into the future in a thoughtful and comprehensive way is vital to our region’s economy; and,

WHEREAS, engagement in the collaborative development of comprehensive public lands legislation provides for economic development opportunities consistent with regional

planning principles that promote sustainable growth and efficient growth patterns in our region now and into the future; and, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Reno, Nevada that the City of Reno supports the development of comprehensive public lands legislation addressing economic development, conservation, and recreation, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Reno, Nevada is committed to partnering with our Nevada Congressional Delegation and other diverse stakeholders to develop a well-balanced approach to comprehensive public land management legislation for Washoe County to facilitate job creation and achieve important conservation goals for the City of Reno and Washoe County, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Reno respectfully requests that Senators Reid and Heller and Congressman Amodei work with diverse stakeholders to expeditiously develop comprehensive public lands legislation for Washoe County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Reno respectfully requests Senators Reid and Heller and Congressman Amodei aim to secure the enactment of comprehensive public lands legislation for Washoe County that considers a well-balanced approach that considers the needs of all regional partners in Washoe County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the members of the City of Reno’s Congressional Delegation.

Upon motion by Councilmember _____, and seconded by Councilmember _____, the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted this _____ day of _____, 2016, by the following vote of the Council:

AYES: _____
NAYS: _____
ABSTAIN: _____ ABSENT: _____

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2016.

HILLARY SCHIEVE
MAYOR

ATTEST:

ASHLEY D. TURNEY
CITY CLERK