

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 2—COMMITTEE
ON NATURAL RESOURCES

FEBRUARY 9, 2009

Referred to Committee on Natural Resources

SUMMARY—Urges Congress to take certain actions concerning wilderness areas and wilderness study areas. (BDR R-604)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: No.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION—Urging the Nevada Congressional Delegation and Congress to take certain actions concerning wilderness areas and wilderness study areas.

Legislative Counsel’s Digest:

1 Federal law provides for the establishment of wilderness areas and wilderness
2 study areas on public lands. This resolution urges the Nevada Congressional
3 Delegation and Congress: (1) to comply with the definitions and requirements
4 found in the Wilderness Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1131 et seq., before approving new
5 wilderness areas; (2) to seek the release of wilderness study areas that have been
6 determined by the Bureau of Land Management of the United States Department of
7 the Interior not to meet the requirements for such a designation; (3) to support the
8 establishment of a schedule for the timely release of wilderness study areas that are
9 found unsuitable for designation as wilderness areas; and (4) not to enact legislation
10 concerning public lands without the support of the affected counties.

1 WHEREAS, The provisions of 16 U.S.C. §§ 1131 et seq.,
2 commonly referred to as the Wilderness Act, establish the National
3 Wilderness Preservation System, which consists of areas of federal
4 public lands that are designated by Congress as wilderness areas;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, The Wilderness Act includes specific definitions and
7 requirements for designating public lands as wilderness areas; and

8 WHEREAS, The provisions of the Wilderness Act and
9 the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43



1 U.S.C. §§ 1701 et seq., provide for the study of certain areas of land
2 to determine whether those areas, commonly known as wilderness
3 study areas, are suitable for designation as wilderness areas; and

4 WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness
5 Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau
6 of Land Management of the United States Department of the
7 Interior, in the late 1970s, conducted an initial inventory of
8 approximately 49 million acres of public lands in Nevada to
9 determine the suitability of those lands for designation as wilderness
10 areas or identification as wilderness study areas and, in 1980,
11 recommended that approximately 5.1 million acres of those lands be
12 identified as wilderness study areas; and

13 WHEREAS, Although many of the areas that were not
14 appropriate for designation as wilderness areas or identification as
15 wilderness study areas have been released for multiple use under the
16 Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau of Land
17 Management continues to manage approximately 2.55 million acres
18 of public lands in Nevada identified as wilderness study areas; and

19 WHEREAS, Counties rely on the use of federal lands for mining,
20 livestock grazing and recreation, and wilderness designations raise
21 concerns regarding access to and use of public lands for economic
22 development, fire suppression and recreation; and

23 WHEREAS, Any federal legislation concerning the use of public
24 lands must recognize the unique aspects of each county and should
25 therefore be developed in cooperation with the affected counties;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, Decisions concerning whether to designate
28 wilderness study areas as wilderness areas or to release those areas
29 for multiple use are important and must be made in a timely manner
30 and without any unnecessary delays so that those lands which are
31 suitable for designation as wilderness areas may be afforded full
32 protection as wilderness areas, and those lands which are not
33 suitable for designation as wilderness areas may be released for use
34 and management for the public good in accordance with law; now,
35 therefore, be it

36 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF
37 NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the members of the Nevada Legislature
38 urge the Nevada Congressional Delegation and Congress:

39 1. To comply fully with the definitions and requirements found
40 in the Wilderness Act in determining whether to designate public
41 lands as wilderness areas or identify public lands as wilderness
42 study areas;

43 2. To seek the release of wilderness study areas that have been
44 determined by the Bureau of Land Management not to meet the
45 requirements for designation as wilderness areas;



1 3. To support the establishment of a schedule for the timely
2 release of wilderness study areas that do not meet the requirements
3 for designation as wilderness areas; and

4 4. Not to adopt any legislation concerning the use of public
5 lands, the designation of wilderness areas or the identification of
6 wilderness study areas unless the legislation receives a resolution of
7 support from the boards of county commissioners of the affected
8 counties; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and
10 transmit a copy of this resolution to the Vice President of the United
11 States as the presiding officer of the United States Senate, the
12 Speaker of the House of Representatives and each member of the
13 Nevada Congressional Delegation; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon
15 passage.

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