

# Central Nevada Regional Water Authority

155 North Taylor Street · Fallon, NV 89406

August 3, 2018

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank  
Chair, Legislative Committee on Public Lands  
Care of: Alysa Keller, Committee Policy Analyst  
Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau  
401 South Carson Street  
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747

RE: Solicitation of Recommendations for Possible Consideration by the Legislative Committee on Public Lands

Dear Chair Swank and Members of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands:

On behalf of the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority thank you for the opportunity to present to your Committee in Hawthorne on May 18<sup>th</sup> and to provide recommendations for possible consideration by the Committee. CNRWA would like to offer the following recommendations:

1. Support enhanced funding to Nevada Division of Water Resources to complete adjudications of all water basins, especially those that are over-allocated or where there are conflicts, and to increase monitoring and data collection. This would help bring finality to some federal claims to water and would assist with groundwater pumping/surface water conflicts. Additional monitoring and data collection are vital to being able to manage our water resources.
2. Continue funding for cloud seeding activities in Nevada. From the 1980s through 2009 the State of Nevada supported a statewide cloud seeding program to increase snowfall and water supply. The program was suspended in 2009 due to budget cuts during the recession and during the 2017 Session the Legislature restored \$680,000 in funding for the program for FY19. The program is a long-term water management tool designed to increase snowfall and the state's subsequent surface and ground water supplies. The goal is to enhance snowfall from winter storms and increase the snowpack and runoff water in several rivers across Nevada through the application of wintertime cloud-seeding technology. Cloud seeding increases the overall snowpack within a watershed by approximately 10% per year. The proposed mature program completed with level funding through 2020-2021 is expected to result in an increase of about 76,300 acre-feet (25 billion gallons) of water at a cost of about \$9 per-acre foot.
3. Continue funding to support competitive "Drought Initiative" grants administered by the Nevada Department of Agriculture. Approximately \$500,000 was appropriated for the current biennium for Nevada producers to implement projects that improve water efficiency for agricultural and livestock production including, but not limited to; installing new equipment or technology, implementing best management practices, laser leveling, riparian improvement (planting soil stabilizers, leaching/run-off control) with the objective of improving water conservation by 1.5-acre feet.

4. Include a position statement in the final report calling for local government land-use plans to be based on identified sustainable water resources and for coordination between local governments and the State Engineer to assure that there is an accurate accounting of water needed for all future land developments. Nevada, the driest state in the nation, has a finite sustainable water supply for its communities and ecosystems, and therefore local government land use plans (master plans) should be based on identified sustainable water resources. It is safe to say many local government land use plans have been developed without consideration of the amount and source of water needed to implement the plans; hence, one sees land use plans that require water resources far more than the known available water supply. Such plans create property owner expectations that cannot be supported by available water resources, and therefore lead to significant pressure on local governments to try to find water, at great cost to the water-gaining and water-losing areas. Prior to 2007 parcel maps were not subject to conditions by a local government or oversight by the State Engineer and the practice of serial parceling led to the creation of significant numbers of developable lots in many parts of our State. It is important for the State Engineer to account for future development created by serial parceling.
5. Include a position statement in the final report recommending a statewide Nevada water future discussion and strategy. Ensuring a secure water future for the State of Nevada must be a top priority for State government, the Nevada Legislature, Nevada's local governments, Nevada's business community, the environmental community and the public.
6. Clarify BLM and USFS cannot hold water rights for wildlife. Wildlife is owned by the State, not the feds and NRS 533.367 already guarantees wildlife access to surface waters.

The Central Nevada Regional Water Authority appreciates your consideration of our recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [ccjfontainen@gmail.com](mailto:ccjfontainen@gmail.com) or 775-443-7667 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fontaine  
Executive Director