



# Legislative Update

**BDR** = Bill Draft Requests  
**NELIS**: Resource for Everything  
 Happening in the Legislature

 **Water Strategy Group**  
 Nevada Natural Resource Policy Experts

**SB** = [Senate Bill](#) | **AB** = [Assembly Bill](#)  
[Legislative Committees](#)  
 ➤ [Assembly Natural Resources](#)  
 ➤ [Senate Natural Resources](#)

## About the Legislative Update

This report, compiled by the Water Strategy Group (WSG) and Meridian Nevada, is regularly updated with current and forthcoming legislative proposals in the 2025 Nevada Legislative Session, which may impact the businesses and industries we engage with daily.

## Overall Legislative Schedule

Date	Day	Key Legislative Task
5-May	Mon	Start Resolving Budget Differences
16-May	Fri	Committee Passage (Second House)
17-May	Sat	Finish Budget Differences
23-May	Fri	Second House Passage
28-May	Wed	Budget Bills Introduced and Exempt Bills from Committee

## Select Bill Summaries

This section covers bills of primary interest, as of the date of this report, with a more comprehensive tracking table included in Exhibit 1.

### [AB104](#) / [SB36](#)

These are related bills that propose the creation of a 'Nevada Water Buy-Back Initiative' for retiring water rights with the program intended to sunset in 2035. As written, these bills would require the State Engineer to reject groundwater right applications if the groundwater has been retired, which may apply to the entire basin. See below for more details on AB104 and SB36. Both bills were modified by the Legislative

Council Bureau (LCB) after passage out of their respective Committees.

### [AB9](#)

Under [NRS 533.0243](#), a person is already allowed to temporarily convert agricultural water rights for wildlife purposes or to improve the flow quality of water for up to 3 years, which may be extended in increments of up to 3 years at a time. This bill would allow for temporary conversions of up to 5 years with 5-year extensions. See below and Exhibit 3 for additional information on the version will be sent to the Senate as amended.

### [AB419](#)

As originally introduced, this bill would have, among other things, require State Engineer comply with Administrative Procedures Act for adopting regulations. Other proposals in the original bill include would have required new regulations to establish a pre-application review process, with reductions in the amount of time allowed for approving or rejecting certain applications, and a requirement for the State Engineer to issue preliminary determinations on certain applications. Another proposed change in this bill would have revised provisions relating to judicial review decisions by the State Engineer. The current version of the bill has been substantially reduced (in scope) with only Sections 1, 4, and 10 (portions) remaining. See below for additional details.



Lake Las Vegas. Clark County, Nevada.

### SB31

In 2017, [NRS 533.087](#) was adopted to require a date of December 31, 2027 in which a claimant of any vested water right must file proof, otherwise such claim would be considered abandoned. SB31 was proposed by the State Engineer to exempt the Federal Government from the deadline for filing reserved or vested claims before the 2027 cutoff.

## Weekly Highlights

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Nevada Legislative Session began on Monday, February 3, 2025. Each week, WSG will use this Section to describe certain developments with tracked legislation and interpretations of select bills that will help each client assess potential implications to their business. This information is intended to help determine if any WSG client should plan on taking a public position in support of or against a bill and/or proposed amendment.

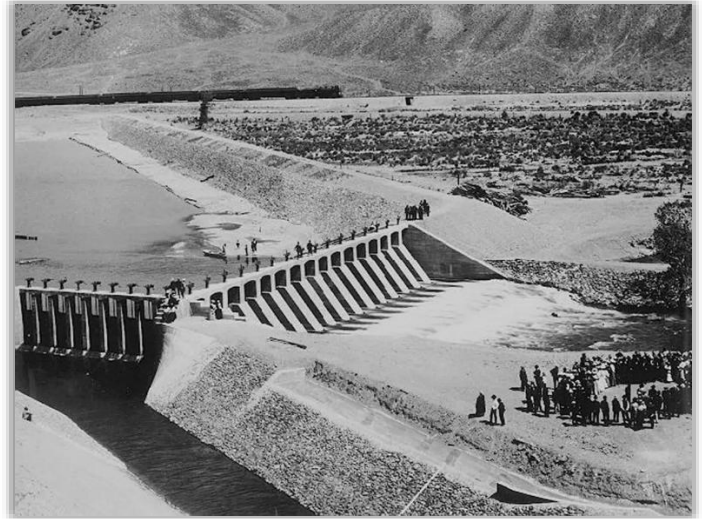
WSG continues monitoring and engaging on 17 bills going forward. While the last week was relatively slow (compared to prior weeks), WSG and Meridian spent most of our time working on SB31 and AB104 trying to sort out some confusion around LCB-driven changes that occurred prior to first house passage, as explained below.

### SB31 Background

WSG commented extensively on this bill and our opposition in our March 9<sup>th</sup> (Week 5), April 6<sup>th</sup> (Week 9), April 13<sup>th</sup> (Week 10), April 19<sup>th</sup> (Week 11), and April 26<sup>th</sup> (Week 12) reports.

On Friday, Apr. 25<sup>th</sup>, WSG and Meridian met with Assemblyman Howard Watts to discuss our concerns with SB31. Mr. Watts will play a critical role in educating his caucus members and steering this bill through the Natural Resources Committee. While Mr. Watts was clear in his intent to keep a deadline in place (preferring to keep the current 2027 deadline) for filing vested claims, he understood the importance in addressing the proposed exemption for the Federal Government including a potential

interim study as recommended by WSG. At the request of Assemblyman Watts, WSG worked with Taggart & Taggart law firm to develop an updated amendment, see Exhibit 3.



Dedication of the Truckee River Diversion Dam (Derby Dam) and Newlands Project in Nevada, 1905. Photo courtesy of the Bureau of Reclamation.

While we were hoping to delay the anticipated Assembly Natural Resources hearing another week or more, we recently learned that bill is now scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday May 7<sup>th</sup>.

WSG is working closely with the Nevada Farm Bureau (see recent Newsletter in Exhibit 3), in meeting the following objective in advance on the hearing:

1. Meet with every Committee member to educate them on the dangers of SB31 if passed as written and discuss our recently proposed amendment (Exhibit 3), and
2. Develop questions for select committee members to ask of the State Engineer after presenting the bill during the hearing.

The Farm Bureau also confirmed that former Senator Pete Goicoechea will be testifying in opposition to SB31, which is particularly interesting because the current statute that incorporated the December 31, 2027 deadline for filing vested claims in Nevada was the result of a bill that Mr. Goicoechea helped get passed in 2017.

### AB419 Background

This is another bill in which WSG has been actively engaged and we reported extensively on it last week where it passed out of committee with only Sections 1, 4, and 10 included. It will now head to the Ways and Means Committee, which has not been scheduled for a hearing yet.

Below is an **updated** summary of the portions of AB419 that passed out of committee **are currently being developed with the bill sponsor (Assemblyman DeLong)**, as summarized below:



1. A provision which would require the Nevada Division of Water Resources to submit a report by September 15<sup>th</sup>, of each even numbered year, before the next Legislative Session (this report would cover all applications which haven't received a final decision after two years – it would also cover the primary reason for the decision to not have been reached after the two years);
2. A provision which seeks to have the State Engineer to adopt regulations to establish a pre-application process to discuss a proposed application to identify potential barriers to approve the application; and
3. A provision which directs that regulatory actions would go through a required process of using the Administrative Procedures Act.

Based on the limited scope in what passed in AB419, WSG is now supportive and will continue working to help get this bill passed without placing an unreasonable (increased burden) on the NDWR.

#### AB104 / SB36 Background

During WSG's participation in a legislative stakeholder group that developed the language for this bill, we expressed concern with language in Section 2 that essentially ties the hands of the State Engineer when considering applications in basins where water rights have been retired. Naturally, the Environmental NGOs in this group supported the language, but those of us who advocate for maximizing beneficial use saw a major problem. In our opinion, if a previously over-pumped basin is brought back into balance by retirements and water resources are available for appropriation (i.e. due to new science supporting higher water availability), then the State Engineer should be able to process those applications in accordance with [NRS 533.370](#). Fortunately, in both bill versions that passed their respective committees, Section 2 was revised as recommended by WSG and Section 3 was removed.

As we have previously reported, most of the testimony for AB104 and SB36 was in support of the bills as amended, with only one testimony in opposition for both. It is interesting to note that the 'buy-back' program contemplated in AB104 is being modeled after the [2024 Nevada Water Conservation and Infrastructure Initiative](#), where \$25 million in federal grants were used to fund groundwater retirements from willing parties. However, as shown in a recent [DRI presentation](#) at the 2025 [NWRA Conference](#), only 47% of the groundwater retired as part of the 2024 program was actually 'wet water', which means that private entities were paid with federal tax dollars to retire water rights being utilized at less than 50%. This rather embarrassing fact was never mentioned during the AB104 and SB36 hearings.

Unfortunately, **two weeks ago**, in advance of the floor votes in their respective houses, the LCB added the original

language back into Sections 2 and 3 claiming it was necessary for 'conforming' purposes. This is a major problem and if either (AB104 or SB36) pass with Sections 2 and 3, as originally introduced, it will tie the hands of the State Engineer and prevent him from considering/approving any applications for new water rights in basins where retirements have occurred. In conversations with the State Engineer, it is our understanding that he agrees with our assessment of this risk and also believes that we need to get Sections 2 and 3 back to or similar to what passed out of Committee(s).

It should also be noted that WSG participated in a **recent** NvMA Water Working Group (WWG) meeting, where it was decided that the industry would take an opposing position to AB104 unless Sections 2 and 3 were properly addressed.

**As a result of the growing opposition to the misguided and unjustified LCB changes, the Legislative Stakeholder group, who spearheaded AB104, met this past week and decided to move forward with an excellent amendment proposed by the State Engineer's Office that properly addressed our concerns in Sections 2 and 3. However, while the amendment proposed by the State Engineer is workable, WSG would still prefer that Sections 2 and 3 be removed consistent with what passed out the respective committees for AB104 (and SB36, if necessary). It should also be noted that SB36 still has a fiscal note on it so we anticipate that AB104 will be the bill that goes forward for this proposed water rights retirement program. Included in Exhibit 3 is the latest amendment that was produced by the Legislative Stakeholder group (note the highlighted text in Sections 2 and 3).**

#### AB9 Background

WSG has been quiet regarding this bill over last several weeks, but it was stated during last week's NvMA WWG meeting that the Association was now opposed to the bill. Even though no reason was provided for this sudden change, it is clear that the Mining Association is now better aligned with the original position taken by WSG in opposing this bill as stated in our Exhibit posted on NELIS at:

- [2025 AB9 Testimony in Opposition - Water Strategy Group submitted by Jay Dixon](#)

#### Tracking Table

A detailed (hyperlinked) tracking table is attached to this report ([see Exhibit 1](#)). One of the main objectives for this report is to inform on BDRs initially targeted for review and consideration as to how they may affect WSG clients. As details emerge and hearings are completed, some of these bills will be removed from the tracking table unless a client requests them to remain or be added back. Each week the Exhibit 1 tracking table is highlighted with red text when updates, additions or changes are made.

## Recent Meetings & Hearings

The following hyperlinked table can be used to quickly access meeting and hearing details from the prior week on the Nevada Legislative website. For a summary of each (tracked) bill hearing, summarized notes are provided in Exhibit 2.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>BILL</u>	<u>BILL MEETING &amp; HEARING NOTES (EXHIBIT 2)</u>	<u>RESULT</u>
29-Apr	<a href="#">AB429</a>	<a href="#">Hearing on AB429 - relating to easements</a>	Heard
30-Apr	<a href="#">SB43</a>	<a href="#">Hearing on SB43 - relating to drinking water and waste management</a>	Heard

## Upcoming Meetings / Hearings

Bills that passed out of 1<sup>st</sup> house committees will be scheduled for money committees, floor sessions and votes in the coming weeks.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>BILL HEARING LINK</u>
5-May	Mon.	<a href="#">Hearing on SB143 - interim study on artificial and synthetic grass</a>
7-May	Wed.	<a href="#">Hearing on SB31 - deadline for filing vested water rights</a>

## WSG Clients

WSG strives to avoid conflicts of interest, which requires transparent communications regarding our work in the Legislature and the clients we are representing. Below is a summary of each of the business entities associated with WSG's lobbying activities during the Legislative Session.

### [Gold Standard Ventures \(US\) Inc. \(Orla Mining\)](#)

Gold Standard Ventures (US) Inc. (GSV) was acquired by Orla Mining in 2022. Orla Mining (Orla) is an emerging, growth-oriented, low-cost, mid-tier gold producer. GSV/Orla is in the feasibility and permitting stages of an open pit, heap leach project located on the prolific Carlin trend in Elko County Nevada. Specifically, the GSV/Orla team is pursuing development of the South Railroad Project, which is a low-complexity project with robust economics, situated on a highly prospective land package known as the South Carlin Complex that would support open pit mining and heap leach production from the Dark Star and Pinion deposits over an eight-year mine life.

### [Mason Resources \(Hudbay Minerals Inc\)](#)

The Mason project is a large greenfield copper deposit located in the historic Yerington District of Nevada and is one of the largest undeveloped copper porphyry deposits in North America. The Mason deposit is a large tonnage, copper-molybdenum deposit and is planned to be a traditional open pit shovel/truck operation with a copper sulphide mineral processing plant producing commercial grade copper and molybdenum concentrate. The plant is designed to operate at a throughput rate of 120,000 tonnes per day.

### [Singatse Peak Services \(Lion Copper and Gold\)](#)

Singatse Peak Services (SPS) is a subsidiary of Lion Copper and Gold (LCG) and is in various stages of project exploration, evaluation and permitting a handful of projects within their larger Mason Valley project portfolio, which includes financial backing from Rio Tinto. Mason Valley is the site of a large, historic copper camp in a premier jurisdiction 50 miles southeast of Reno. The MacArthur Project represents the advancement of a large oxide copper deposit. The Yerington Project includes 11 square miles of patented claims and fee mineral properties centered on a former open pit copper mine.

### **BTaz Nevada LLC**

BTaz Nevada (BTaz) is one of the largest agricultural producers in the state, operating within six Nevada counties. BTaz owns approximately 32,500 acres of private land associated with its farming operations and possesses grazing permits on nearly 3.6 million acres of public (BLM and Forest Service) land. BTaz manages up to 15,000 head of cattle and maintains nearly 300 active surface and groundwater rights in Nevada.

### **Flying M Ranch (dba The Rose of Snowville)**

The Flying M Ranch is situated in the Lower Humboldt River Region near Imlay. This large ranching operation includes three BLM Grazing Allotments spanning 881 mi<sup>2</sup> and nearly 23,000 acres of private land supporting up to 2,500 head of cattle. The livestock operation is supported by 68 surface water rights and 39 groundwater rights for stockwater. Additionally, the Flying M Ranch owns 3,527 acre-ft of decreed Humboldt River rights for irrigation on 2,410 acres of land, which includes 2,530 acre-ft of some of the most senior decreed rights on the river with 1863 and 1864 priority dates.



### [Dixon Hydrologic, PLLC](#)

## Meridian Nevada

WSG works closely with [Meridian Nevada](#), which specializes in strategic consulting services for businesses, organizations, and agencies that are looking to thrive and make a lasting impact in the upcoming legislative session. Meridian provides robust experience in navigating the complex legislative process at the local, state, and federal levels. Their expertise in forming and maintaining legislative relationships is invaluable.

### Lobbying Approach

WSG was created to provide a unique option for water resource policy advocacy based on decades of actual technical experience in the application of Nevada water policy in the development and management of water resources throughout the State. WSG's positions are driven by science, not politics. Our overarching goal at WSG is to maximize the beneficial use of Nevada's water resources to maintain and grow Nevada's economy while protecting existing rights and environmental resources.

Water resources play a critical role in all the existing businesses and projects being associated with WSG's clients. Our clients generally share many common objectives, which will guide our lobbying efforts during this Legislative Session. These objectives can be summarized as follows:

1. Maintaining a fair and reliable regulatory framework in Nevada that is supportive of the extractive mineral, agricultural, and energy industries.
2. Help develop and support legislation that provides added efficiencies in Nevada's permitting and regulatory processes.
3. Monitor and participate in select legislative proposals and bills that support the companies' project objectives and help modify or eliminate bills that may conflict with those objectives.
4. Remain actively engaged in legislative processes in the promotion of bills that help ensure timely and reliable access to and beneficial use of Nevada's water resources in support of project exploration, development, and operational objectives.

## WSG Background

While we are considered 'paid lobbyists', this is not our full-time job. Jay Dixon and his associates are Professional Engineers and Water Rights Specialists who make a living designing and permitting water infrastructure with a focus on the sustainable and beneficial use of Nevada's water resources for maximizing economic output.

### Industry Focused



Mining



Agriculture



Energy



Public Works | Municipal

**EXHIBIT 1 -**  
**Weekly Legislative Tracking Table**



**In-Session Tracking (Select Water Bills)**

Updated on 5/2/25

**BDR** Bills that were pulled into money committees, or appear likely to be pulled in due to a fiscal not or unfunded mandate.

**Green** Bills that received a floor vote.

BDR	Bill	Sponsor	Bill Description	Overview	Status / Position	BILL STATUS
<b>Water Resources Bills</b>						
17-10	<a href="#">SB143</a>	Senator Nguyen	Provisions relating to water.	AN ACT relating to natural resources; authorizing the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources to evaluate and review issues relating to water conservation; requiring the NDEP and DCNR to conduct an interim study on artificial turf and synthetic grass; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.	Will monitor and consider after first hearing.	Passed Senate 21-0. Referred to Assembly Natural Resources. <b>Hearing scheduled for Monday, May 5, 2025</b>
48-391	<a href="#">AB9</a>	Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources (NRS 218E.320)	Revises provisions governing the temporary conversion of agricultural water.	Under existing law, a person or entity may apply to temporarily convert agricultural water rights for wildlife purposes or to improve the quality or flow of water for a duration not to exceed 3 years and a temporary conversion may be extended in increments not to exceed 3 years in duration each. (NRS 533.0243) This bill instead provides that a temporary conversion of agricultural water rights may not exceed 5 years in duration and may be extended in increments that may not exceed 5 years in duration each.	<b>WSG remains opposed to this bill.</b> The bill sponsor has continued working with the Great Basin Water Network and Eureka County to improve what was initially introduced as a 'sloppy' amendment according to the State Engineer. WSG and the State Engineer testified in opposition. WSG recommended a simple alternative based on a proposed amendment to AB90 from the 2023 Session. This bill was amended and passed out of 1st Committee.	Passed Assembly Natural Resources. Referred to Assembly Ways and Means because of fiscal note. No Assembly Ways hearing scheduled yet.
22-407	<a href="#">AB10</a>	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs	Revises provisions relating to local improvement projects.	Related to local improvement projects; authorizing any county, city or town to repair a private water or sewer system that is owned by a common-interest community as part of a neighborhood improvement project; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.	Will continue monitoring; neutral.	Passed Assembly 37-5 (Rs Cole, Dickman, Gallant, Gray, and Hafen NOs). Referred to Senate Government Affairs.
48-261	<a href="#">AB26</a>	Division of Water Resources	Revises various provisions relating to dams.	Proposes exemption from liability for certain damages, revises provisions relating to construction or alteration of certain dams, exempts certain works under certain Federal jurisdictions, requires certain dam applications be made available to NDOW, authorizes State Engineer to enter certain parcels, revises provisions relating to dam removal and removal of certain animals interfering with flow, provides certain penalties relating thereto.	WSG remains supportive of this bill.	Passed Assembly 42-0. Heard in Senate Natural Resources on Thursday, April 24, 2025



Bills that were pulled into money committees, or appear likely to be pulled in due to a fiscal not or unfunded mandate.

Bills that received a floor vote.

BDR	Bill	Sponsor	Bill Description	Overview	Status / Position	BILL STATUS
Water Resources Bills						
48-383	<a href="#">AB104</a>	Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources (NRS 218E.320)	Revises provisions relating to water right retirements.	Would require the State Engineer to retire certain water rights; revising provisions relating temporary permits to appropriate groundwater; creating the Nevada Conservation and Recreation Program; creating the Account for Retiring Water Rights; establishing the Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement Program and the Advisory Committee for the Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement Program.	As explained in earlier reports, WSG was able to broker a major (fix) to this bill with the removal of certain language in Sections 2 and 3, <b>which passed out of Committee. However, 2 weeks ago it was discovered that the LCB had added the previously removed language back into Sections 2 and 3 claiming it was 'necessary conforming.'</b> This major change to the bill that passed out of the Assembly. Based on the unnecessary LCB amendment, WSG was opposed to this bill. Earlier this week the NDWR offered a reasonable solution for Sections 2 and 3 as shown in Exhibit 3. WSG is now neutral on this bill, but close monitoring and engagement will be required as this moves through the Senate.	Passed Assembly 42-0. Referred to Senate Natural Resources. No hearing yet scheduled
48-586	<a href="#">AB132</a>	Assemblyman Yurek	Revises provisions relating to water.	Proposes to update requirements for wildlife guzzlers to increase capacity (from 20k gal. to 40k gal. and max. allowable pipeline distance from 0.25 to 0.5 miles.	WSG testified in support of this bill.	Passed Assembly 42-0. Referred to Senate Natural Resources. No hearing yet scheduled.
48-385	<a href="#">AB363</a>	Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources (NRS 218E.320)	Revises provisions relating to groundwater boards.	Similar bill that has failed in the prior two Sessions. Under this proposal, a county—or multiple counties sharing a groundwater basin—may request that the State Engineer establish an advisory-only groundwater board tasked with providing written advice and recommendations on reducing over-pumping and managing the basin sustainably. The board's recommendations are not binding on the State Engineer, and any disagreement between the board and the State Engineer does not serve as grounds for legal action.	WSG is neutral, but agrees with the opposition remarks by SNWA.	Passed Assembly Natural Resources. Referred to Assembly Ways & Means because of fiscal note. No Assembly Ways & Means hearing scheduled.

**Bills that were pulled into money committees, or appear likely to be pulled in due to a fiscal not or unfunded mandate.**

**Bills that received a floor vote.**

BDR	Bill	Sponsor	Bill Description	Overview	Status / Position	BILL STATUS
<b>Water Resources Bills</b>						
48-736	<a href="#">AB419</a>	Assemblyman DeLong	Revises provisions relating to applications concerning water rights.	Originally a massive bill that would completely altered the NV Div. of Water Resources by double the size of their staff. A substantially scaled down bill, via a last minute amendment, passed out of a special Work Session. As amended and passed: (Section 1) requiring regulations for the preapplications meetings with State Engineer, (Section 4) biennial reporting to the Leg. by the State Engineer on delayed applications and rulings (more than 2 years), and (Section 10) requires the State Engineer to explain why a decision is made against prior precedent when applicable.	WSG remains neutral and will remain engaged on this bill.	Referred from Assembly Natural Resources without recommendation to the Assembly Ways & Means Committee. No Assembly Ways & Means hearing scheduled.
S-389	<a href="#">SB6</a>	Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources (NRS 218E.320)	Cloud seeding	Makes an appropriation from the State General Fund to the Desert Research Institute of the Nevada System of Higher Education to support the Nevada State Cloud Seeding Program.	WSG is Neutral.	Passed Senate Natural Resources. Pulled into Senate Finance because of an appropriation. No Senate Finance hearing scheduled.
48-260	<a href="#">SB31</a>	Division of Water Resources	Revises provisions relating to the adjudication of vested water rights	Seeks to exempt federal agencies from filing claims of vested rights from requirement to file proof of the claim on or before a certain date; revising requirements relating to a notice of pending adjudication of certain water rights; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.	WSG met with the Nevada Farm Bureau and the Administrative Law Judge (NDWR) about this bill. The Farm Bureau is preparing to oppose the bill. WSG is studying the legislative history and implications of the McCarran Act on this bill. It appears that the bill may be necessary. WSG testified in opposition to this bill and is currently working with Taggart & Taggart on an amendment that we'll likely try to get introduced in the Assembly.	Passed Senate Floor 15-6 (All Rs NO except Rogich and Steinbeck. *Titus read WSG/Meridian floor statement against SB31). Referred to Assembly Natural Resources where WSG is working to amend the bill. <b>Hearing scheduled for Wednesday, May 7, 2025.</b>
48-384	<a href="#">SB36</a>	Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources (NRS 218E.320)	Establishes provisions relating to the conservation of groundwater.	Nevada Water Buy-Back Initiative and the Advisory Committee for the Nevada Water Buy-Back Initiative; requiring the Director of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to purchase certain water rights for the purpose of retiring the water rights; creating the Nevada Conservation and Recreation Program; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.	WSG is now opposed to this bill based on an apparent change prior to floor vote that significantly altered the bill from the version that passed out of Committee.	Passed Senate Natural Resources. Referred to Senate Finance because of fiscal note. No Senate Finance hearing scheduled.

Bills that were pulled into money committees, or appear likely to be pulled in due to a fiscal not or unfunded mandate.

  Bills that received a floor vote.

BDR	Bill	Sponsor	Bill Description	Overview	Status / Position	BILL STATUS
Water Resources Bills						
40-750	<a href="#">SB276</a>	Numerous Sponsors	Seeks to establish provisions governing the reporting and sharing of water-related information by certain gov. entities and Indian tribes.	Proposes new requirements for any city, county, unincorporated town, district, water authority, and Indian tribes to provide certain notifications to other related entities when applying for a permit to discharge water into a water of the State.	WSG is currently neutral, but will closely monitor. It should be noted that bill has an 'unfunded mandate' on it.	Passed Senate Floor 21-0. Referred to Assembly Natural Resources. No hearing yet scheduled.



**In-Session Tracking (Select Natural Resources Bills)**

Updated on 5/2/25

**Bills that were pulled into money committees, or appear likely to be pulled in due to a fiscal not or unfunded mandate.**

**Bills that received a floor vote.**

BDR	Bill	Sponsor	Bill Description	Overview	Status / Position	BILL STATUS
<b>Select Environmental &amp; Natural Resources Bills</b>						
42-265	<a href="#">AB40</a>	Division of Environmental Protection	Revises various provisions relating to environmental hazards.	Revising provisions governing mining reclamation to include the stabilization of process fluids; revising certain requirements for a permit to engage in a mining operation or exploration project; requiring the State Environmental Commission to adopt regulations relating to the requirements for the owner or operator of a municipal solid waste landfill or solid waste management facility to provide certain evidence of financial responsibility.	Monitoring through NvMA who is working closely with NDEP on language. Seeks to provide NDEP with resources to be proactive in responding to mining emergency situations. Proposes changes to bonding issues relative to bankruptcy courts to ensure the NDEP is first in line to collect. Deals primarily with battery recycling and fluid management.	Passed Assembly Floor Vote 41-1 (R-Kasama NO). No hearing yet scheduled.
18-214	<a href="#">AB242</a>	Assemblyman DeLong	Revises provisions relating to the Sagebrush Ecosystem Council.	Seeks to place existing Sagebrush Ecosystem Council rules pertaining to sage grouse credits/debits into regulation.	WSG met with bill sponsor and is supportive of bill. Opposition groups testified during initial hearing regarding their dislike for the program, which was a waste of time (for them). See Exhibit 3 for hearing notes.	Passed Asm Government Affairs. Pulled into Assembly Ways & Means. No hearing scheduled.

Bills that were pulled into money committees, or appear likely to be pulled in due to a fiscal not or unfunded mandate.

Bills that received a floor vote.

BDR	Bill	Sponsor	Bill Description	Overview	Status / Position	BILL STATUS
<b>Select Environmental &amp; Natural Resources Bills</b>						
10-679	<a href="#">AB429</a>	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources	Revises provisions relating to natural resources.	Existing law authorizes, with certain exceptions, an easement for conservation to be created conveyed, recorded, assigned, released, modified, terminated or otherwise altered or affected in the same manner as other easements. (NRS 111.420) This bill instead provides that any person, including a state or local government or any agency or instrumentality thereof, is authorized to create, convey, record, assign, release, modify, terminate or otherwise alter or affect an easement for conservation in the same manner as other easements.	WSG is neutral.	Passed Assembly Floor Vote 42-0. Referred to Senate Natural Resources. <b>Heard on Tuesday, April 29, 2025.</b>
40-264	<a href="#">SB43</a>	Division of Environmental Protection	Revises provisions relating to environmental protection	AN ACT relating to environmental protection. This bill is designed to address delegation of authorities, from the NDEP to local Health Districts. It is related to two programs; specifically, safe drinking water and solid waste management. .	WSG is neutral.	Passed Senate Floor Vote 18-3 (Rs Buck, Ellison, Titus NOs). Referred to Assembly Natural Resources. <b>Heard on Wednesday, April 30, 2025.</b>
26-392	<a href="#">SB286</a>	Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources (NRS 218E.320)	Seeks to establish state policy relating to tribal expertise and knowledge of public lands.	AN ACT relating to planning; declaring the importance of tribal knowledge and expertise and consulting tribal governments when engaged in the land use planning process; revising provisions relating to the State and Local Government Cooperation Act to include tribal governments.	WSG is neutral.	Passed Senate Natural Resources. Pulled into Senate Finance. No hearing scheduled.

## **EXHIBIT 2 – Hearing & Meeting Notes**



**Assembly Bill 429 – Revises provisions relating to natural resources.**

**Senate Natural Resources - Tuesday, April 29, 2025**

AB 429 clarifies that public entities may place a conservation easement on land they already own and then convey that easement to a qualified conservation holder, thereby strengthening the certainty and long-term enforceability of both existing and future easements under Nevada’s Uniform Conservation Easement Act (NRS 111.390-.440). The measure was presented by Jake Tibbitts, Natural Resources Manager for Eureka County, and Alicia Reban, Executive Director of the Nevada Land Trust. During the hearing, Senator Ellison asked whether routine maintenance and repairs could still be performed within an easement, while Senator Hansen sought the statewide count and locations of existing easements and inquired about related tax incentives. The presenters noted that roughly twenty easements are currently recorded in Nevada—four of them in Eureka County—added that the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is assembling a comprehensive map and database, and confirmed that the enhanced federal tax deduction for donated easements remains in place following closure of the abused “syndicated easement” loophole. No formal amendments were offered.

Testimony in support came solely from the Nevada Conservation League; no opposing or neutral testimony was given. The chair closed the hearing without scheduling a work session, indicating only that the bill could re-appear if ready for a May 1st meeting.

## **Senate Bill 43 – Revises provisions relating to environmental protection**

### **Heard in Assembly Natural Resources - Wednesday, April 30, 2025**

SB 43 updates Nevada's delegation framework for the Safe Drinking Water program (NRS 445A) and the Solid-Waste Management program (NRS 444), allowing a district board of health to assume all or part of either program once it demonstrates sufficient technical, managerial and financial capacity and signs an interlocal agreement with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), thereby protecting the state's federal primacy. Administrator Jennifer Carr of NDEP presented the bill and explained that Sections 4 and 20 establish designation and revocation procedures; Sections 13.5 and 23 compel the State Environmental Commission to adopt regulations spelling out capacity criteria and the designation process; and Section 34 grandfathers the existing Northern and Southern Nevada Health Districts. Assemblymember Heidi Kasama requested that electronic mail be added as an acceptable method for delivering deficiency notices, which Carr agreed to explore with counsel. Assemblymember Erica Mosca (identified as "Hansen" in the transcript) asked how the forthcoming regulations would define capacity and structure appeals, and Assemblymember Sabra Newby (appearing as "Caris") requested plain-language clarification of the sixty-day cure period for deficiencies. No amendments were submitted during the hearing, though NDEP signaled openness to the electronic-notice tweak.

There was no testimony in support or opposition; Northern Nevada Public Health and the Nevada Association of Counties testified neutrally and commended NDEP for its collaborative approach.

The hearing closed with Administrator Carr stating that draft regulations will be developed as soon as the permanent rule-making window opens on July 1 2025, with adoption targeted well before the 2027 session.

## **EXHIBIT 3 – Legislative Reviews**



May 2, 2025



## Nevada Farm Bureau Grassroots

Newsletter for May 2, 2025



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### This Issue:

- Possible Advancement Of AB 419
- SB 31 Scheduled For Wednesday, May 7
- SB 180 Hearing Set For Thursday, May 8
- Results Of Economic Forum Likely To Translate To Action For Money Committees
- Market Intel Offers Insights To The Importance Of Off Farm Income
- Plan To Join Us! Farm Bureau ACES Baseball Outing

**Possible Advancement Of AB 419**

When we last checked in on AB 419 the Assembly Natural Resources Committee had held a special Friday afternoon meeting to hold a work session to send the proposal forward to the Ways and Means Committee without

recommendation. The bill had gained an exemption

from the deadline and also went through an amendment which whittled it down to three sections:



1. A provision which would require the Nevada Division of Water Resources to submit a report by September 15<sup>th</sup>, of each even numbered year, before the next Legislative Session (this report would cover all applications which haven't received a final decision after two years – it would also cover the primary reason for the decision to not have been reached after the two years);
2. A provision which seeks to have the State Engineer to adopt regulations to establish a pre-application process to discuss a proposed application to identify potential barriers to approve the application; and
3. A provision which directs that regulatory actions would go through a required process of using the Administrative Procedures Act.

In a meeting with water stakeholders, bill sponsor, Assemblyman Rich DeLong, of Reno, was able to fine tune the potential approach of removing the bill's fiscal note and ending up with a version that would have a consensus of elements to advance...(the idea kept points 1 and 3 above). It remains to be seen on how this re-vamped language will be accepted by legislative committee/floor actions.

During the initial hearing for AB 415, Nevada Farm Bureau [presented this neutral testimony](#) . If the next version of the amended language covers the first and third elements from above, Nevada Farm Bureau would anticipate supporting the bill. Of particular interest is Farm Bureau's concerns over more timely processing of applications, which could be linked to the regular reporting.



## SB 31 Scheduled For Wednesday, May 7



Based on our meeting with the chair of the Assembly Natural Resources

Committee, Assemblymember Natha Anderson, the committee will be holding a hearing on **SB 31**. Nevada Farm Bureau is strongly opposed to the bill as it stands. The legislation proposes to drop federal agencies from having to submit their proof of claims for vested water rights but still seeks to punish private water right vested water right claims if they don't comply with the December 31, 2027, deadline.

We strongly encourage you to contact members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee members to urge them to change the deadline to protect the private sector from the inequitable treatment that the Division of Water Resources is promoting.

The Assembly Natural Resources Committee Members:

**Natha Anderson** – Chair Email - [Natha.Anderson@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Natha.Anderson@asm.state.nv.us)

**Selena La Rue Hatch** – Vice Chair Email  
- [Selena.La.Rue.Hatch@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Selena.La.Rue.Hatch@asm.state.nv.us)

**Venicia Considine** Email - [Venicia.Considine@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Venicia.Considine@asm.state.nv.us)

**Jovan Jackson** Email - [jovan.jackson@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:jovan.jackson@asm.state.nv.us)

**Venise Karris** Email - [venise.karris@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:venise.karris@asm.state.nv.us)

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**Howard Watts** Email - [Howard.Watts@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Howard.Watts@asm.state.nv.us)

**Richard DeLong** Email - [Rich.Delong@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Rich.Delong@asm.state.nv.us)

**Bert Gurr** Email - [Bert.Gurr@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Bert.Gurr@asm.state.nv.us)

**Alexis Hansen** Email - [Alexis.Hansen@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Alexis.Hansen@asm.state.nv.us)

**Heidi Kasama** Email - [Heidi.Kasama@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Heidi.Kasama@asm.state.nv.us)

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**SB 180 Hearing Set For Thursday, May 8**

## Proposed Amendments to SB31

**Section 1.** NRS 533.087 is hereby amended to read as follows:

1. A claimant of any vested water right must submit, on a form prescribed by the State Engineer, proof of the claim to the State Engineer on or before December 31, 2027. If a claimant fails to file such proof on or before December 31, 2027, the claim shall be deemed to be abandoned.

2. Until December 31, 2027, the State Engineer shall cause notice of the provisions of subsection 1 to be:

(a) Published annually for 4 consecutive weeks in at least one newspaper of general circulation within the boundaries of each groundwater basin throughout the State.

(b) Posted on the Internet website maintained by the State Engineer.

*3. A federal agency claiming rights in any capacity, including a trust capacity, shall be exempted from the provisions of this Section unless it claims a vested or reserved right in a water source or which the State Engineer has initiated an adjudication through an order for the determination of the relative rights of the water source pursuant to NRS 533.090.*

**Sec. 2.** NRS 533.095 is hereby amended to read as follows:

1. As soon as practicable after the State Engineer enters an order granting the petition or selecting the streams upon which the determination of rights is to begin, the State Engineer shall prepare a notice setting forth the fact of the entry of the order and of the pendency of the proceedings.

2. The notice shall set forth:

(a) That all claimants to rights in the waters of the stream system are required, as provided in this chapter, to make proof of their claims *or amend a proof of claim filed pursuant to Section 1 of this act* ~~except claimants who submitted proof of their claims pursuant to NRS 533.087;~~

(b) The date on which the State Engineer will commence taking proofs of appropriation regarding the rights in and to the waters of the stream system;

(c) The date by which all proofs of appropriation, *or amendments to proofs of appropriation filed pursuant to Section 1 of this act*, must be filed; and

(d) That all proofs of appropriation must be accompanied by maps prepared in accordance with and depicting any information required pursuant to NRS 533.100 and 533.115.

3. The notice shall be published for a period of 4 consecutive weeks in one or more newspapers of general circulation within the boundaries of the stream system.

4. At or near the time of the first publication of the notice, the State Engineer shall send by mail to each person, or deliver to each person, in person, hereinafter designated as claimant, claiming rights in or to the waters of the stream system, insofar as such claimants can be reasonably ascertained, a notice equivalent in terms to the published notice setting forth the date when the State Engineer will commence the taking of proofs, and the date prior to which proofs must be filed with the State Engineer. The notice must be mailed at least 30 days prior to the date fixed for the commencement of the taking of proofs. The date set prior to which the proofs must be filed shall not be less than 60 days from the date set for the commencement of taking proofs. The notice shall be deemed to be an order of the State Engineer as to its contents.

**Sec. 4.** *The Joint Interim Standing Committee on Natural Resources shall conduct a study during the 2025-2026 interim regarding the deadline mandated in Section 1 and methods, means, and resources needed to (1) make the deadline applicable to federal agencies consistent with the federal McCarran Amendment (43 U.S.C. § 666), and (2) ensure the deadline's compatibility with Nevada's non-impairment doctrine (NRS 533.085). Among the items to be studied shall be the possibility of directing the State Engineer to initiate a statewide adjudication of water resources and identifying any resources the State Engineer might need to accomplish that task. The Committee shall include its findings and recommendations for legislation by subsection 4 of NRS 218E.330 to be prepared and submitted to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmittal to the 84<sup>th</sup> Session of the Legislature.*



**Proposed Amendment to AB 104**  
**April 29, 2025**

**Deletes Sections 21.3**

**Amends Sections 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 25.2**

**Jointly submitted by Allen Biaggi, Doug Busselman, Leo Drozdoff, Chris Mahannah, Kyle Roerink, Andy Belanger, Scott Lake, Jeff Fontaine, Jake Tibbitts, Jaina Moan and Laurel Saito**

**Contact: Chaunsey Chau-Duong** Chaunsey.Chau-Duong@snwa.com

EXPLANATION: Matter in (1) *blue bold italics* is new language in the original bill; (2) variations of *green bold underlining* is language proposed to be added in this amendment; (3) ~~red strikethrough~~ is deleted language in the original bill; (4) ~~purple double strikethrough~~ is language proposed to be deleted in this amendment;

- 1       **Sec. 2.** NRS 533.370 is hereby amended to read as follows:  
2       533.370 1. Except as otherwise provided in this section and  
3 NRS 533.0241, 533.345, 533.371, 533.372 and 533.503, *and*  
4 *section 4 of this act*, the State Engineer shall approve an application  
5 submitted in proper form which contemplates the application of  
6 water to beneficial use if:  
7       (a) The application is accompanied by the prescribed fees;  
8       (b) The proposed use or change, if within an irrigation district,  
9 does not adversely affect the cost of water for other holders of water  
10 rights in the district or lessen the efficiency of the district in its  
11 delivery or use of water; and  
12       (c) The applicant provides proof satisfactory to the State  
13 Engineer of the applicant's:  
14       (1) Intention in good faith to construct any work necessary to  
15 apply the water to the intended beneficial use with reasonable  
16 diligence; and  
17       (2) Financial ability and reasonable expectation actually to  
18 construct the work and apply the water to the intended beneficial use  
19 with reasonable diligence.  
20       2. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 10, ~~[where there]~~  
21 *the State Engineer shall reject an application and refuse to issue*

the requested permit if:

(a) There is no unappropriated water in the proposed source of supply ~~[, where the]~~ ;

(b) The groundwater that has not been committed for use has been reserved pursuant to NRS 533.0241 ;

(c) The application requests a change to or reinstatement of groundwater rights that have been retired pursuant to section 4 of this act; or ~~[where its]~~

(d) The proposed use or change conflicts with existing rights or with protectable interests in existing domestic wells as set forth in NRS 533.024 ~~[.]~~ or threatens to prove detrimental to the public interest . ~~[, the State Engineer shall reject the application and refuse to issue the requested permit.]~~

➡ If a previous application for a similar use of water within the same basin has been rejected on those grounds, the new application may be denied without publication.

3. In addition to the criteria set forth in subsections 1 and 2, in determining whether an application for an interbasin transfer of groundwater must be rejected pursuant to this section, the State Engineer shall consider:

(a) Whether the applicant has justified the need to import the water from another basin;

(b) If the State Engineer determines that a plan for conservation of water is advisable for the basin into which the water is to be

imported, whether the applicant has demonstrated that such a plan has been adopted and is being effectively carried out;

(c) Whether the proposed action is environmentally sound as it relates to the basin from which the water is exported;

(d) Whether the proposed action is an appropriate long-term use which will not unduly limit the future growth and development in the basin from which the water is exported; and

(e) Any other factor the State Engineer determines to be relevant.

4. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and subsections 6 and 10 and NRS 533.365, the State Engineer shall approve or reject each application within 2 years after the final date for filing a protest. The State Engineer may postpone action:

(a) Upon written authorization to do so by the applicant.

(b) If an application is protested.

(c) If the purpose for which the application was made is municipal use.

(d) In areas where studies of water supplies have been determined to be necessary by the State Engineer pursuant to NRS 533.368.

(e) Where court actions or adjudications are pending, which may

22 affect the outcome of the application.

23 (f) In areas in which adjudication of vested water rights is  
24 deemed necessary by the State Engineer.

25 (g) On an application for a permit to change a vested water right  
26 in a basin where vested water rights have not been adjudicated.

27 (h) Where authorized entry to any land needed to use the water  
28 for which the application is submitted is required from a  
29 governmental agency.

30 (i) On an application for which the State Engineer has required  
31 additional information pursuant to NRS 533.375.

32 5. If the State Engineer does not act upon an application in  
33 accordance with subsections 4 and 6, the application remains active  
34 until approved or rejected by the State Engineer.

35 6. Except as otherwise provided in this subsection and  
36 subsection 10, the State Engineer shall approve or reject, within 6  
37 months after the final date for filing a protest, an application filed to  
38 change the point of diversion of water already appropriated when  
39 the existing and proposed points of diversion are on the same  
40 property for which the water has already been appropriated under  
41 the existing water right or the proposed point of diversion is on real  
42 property that is proven to be owned by the applicant and is  
43 contiguous to the place of use of the existing water right. The State  
44 Engineer may postpone action on the application pursuant to  
45 subsection 4.

1 7. If the State Engineer has not approved, rejected or held a  
2 hearing on an application within 7 years after the final date for filing  
3 a protest, the State Engineer shall cause notice of the application to  
4 be republished and reposted pursuant to NRS 533.360 immediately  
5 preceding the time at which the State Engineer is ready to approve  
6 or reject the application. The cost of the republication must be paid  
7 by the applicant. After such republication and reposting, a protest  
8 may be filed in accordance with NRS 533.365.

9 8. If a hearing is held regarding an application, the decision of  
10 the State Engineer must be in writing and include findings of fact,  
11 conclusions of law and a statement of the underlying facts  
12 supporting the findings of fact. The written decision may take the  
13 form of a transcription of an oral ruling. The rejection or approval of  
14 an application must be endorsed on a copy of the original  
15 application, and a record must be made of the endorsement in the  
16 records of the State Engineer. The copy of the application so  
17 endorsed must be returned to the applicant. Except as otherwise  
18 provided in subsection 11, if the application is approved, the  
19 applicant may, on receipt thereof, proceed with the construction of  
20 the necessary works and take all steps required to apply the water to  
21 beneficial use and to perfect the proposed appropriation. If the

application is rejected, the applicant may take no steps toward the prosecution of the proposed work or the diversion and use of the public water while the rejection continues in force.

9. If a person is the successor in interest of an owner of a water right or an owner of real property upon which a domestic well is located and if the former owner of the water right or real property on which a domestic well is located had previously filed a written protest against the granting of an application, the successor in interest must be allowed to pursue that protest in the same manner as if the successor in interest were the former owner whose interest he or she succeeded. If the successor in interest wishes to pursue the protest, the successor in interest must notify the State Engineer in a timely manner on a form provided by the State Engineer.

10. The provisions of subsections 1 to 9, inclusive, do not apply to an application for an environmental permit or a temporary permit issued pursuant to NRS 533.436 or 533.504.

11. The provisions of subsection 8 do not authorize the recipient of an approved application to use any state land administered by the Division of State Lands of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources without the appropriate authorization for that use from the State Land Registrar.

12. As used in this section, "domestic well" has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 534.350.

**Sec. 3.** NRS 533.371 is hereby amended to read as follows:

533.371 The State Engineer shall reject the application and refuse to issue a permit to appropriate water for a specified period if the State Engineer determines that:

1. The application is incomplete;

2. The prescribed fees have not been paid;

3. The proposed use is not temporary;

4. There is no water available from the proposed source of supply without exceeding the perennial yield or safe yield of that source;

5. The groundwater that has not been committed for use from the proposed source of supply has been reserved pursuant to NRS 533.0241;

6. **The application requests a change to or reinstatement of groundwater rights that have been retired pursuant to section 4 of this act;**

7. The proposed use conflicts with existing rights; or

~~7.1~~ 8. The proposed use threatens to prove detrimental to the public interest.

**Sec. 4.** Chapter 534 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new section to read as follows:

1. The State Engineer shall retire all ~~vested~~ adjudicated or certificated groundwater rights purchased by or donated to the Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement Program pursuant to section 10 of this act using any appropriate mechanism, as determined by the State Engineer, and preclude that groundwater from appropriation. Any ~~vested~~ adjudicated or certificated groundwater right that has been retired pursuant to this section is not available for any use and shall be deemed to be retired in the source in perpetuity.

2. The State Engineer shall not retire any vested or certificated groundwater right pursuant to subsection 1 unless the purchase of the groundwater right or the donation of the groundwater right was approved by the Director of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources pursuant to section 10 of this act on or before June 30, 2035.

**Sec. 9.** 1. The Account for Retiring Water Rights is hereby created in the State General Fund.

2. The Account for Retiring Water Rights must be administered by the Director in accordance with the Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement Program established by section 10 of this act. In addition to any direct legislative appropriation, the Director may apply for and accept any gift, donation, bequest, grant, federal money or other source of money for deposit in the Account for Retiring Water Rights.

3. The money in the Account for Retiring Water Rights must only be used for administering the Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement Program established by section 10 of this act, to purchase ~~vested~~ adjudicated or certificated groundwater rights for retirement pursuant to section 10 of this act and to provide matching money required as a condition of accepting any source of money that would result in the retirement of groundwater rights pursuant to sections 4 and 10 of this act.

4. The money in the Account for Retiring Water Rights or any portion of the money in the Account for Retiring Water Rights may be invested or reinvested in accordance with the provisions of chapter 355 of NRS. The proceeds of such investments and the interest and income earned on the money in the Account for Retiring Water Rights, after deducting any applicable charges, must be credited to the Account for Retiring Water Rights.

5. Any money remaining in the Account for Retiring Water Rights at the end of a fiscal year does not revert to the State General Fund, and the balance in the Account for Retiring Water Rights must be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

6. The Director may enter into an agreement with a public or



2 private entity to apply for, obtain or manage any money  
3 contributed to the Account for Retiring Water Rights.

4 **Sec. 10. 1.** The Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement  
5 Program is hereby established in the Nevada Conservation and  
6 Recreation Program created by section 8 of this act to purchase  
7 and retire ~~vested~~ adjudicated or certificated groundwater rights  
8 from willing  
9 sellers and to accept donations of groundwater rights for  
10 retirement in order to:

11 (a) Protect the natural resources of this State;  
12 (b) Address declining levels of groundwater; or  
13 (c) Address conflicts with existing rights or with protectable  
14 interests in existing domestic wells.

15 2. The Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement Program  
16 must be administered by the Director. In administering the  
17 Program, the Director shall, to the extent money is available in the  
18 Account for Retiring Water Rights created by section 9 of this act,  
19 identify and purchase ~~vested~~ adjudicated or certificated  
20 groundwater rights for  
21 retirement by the State Engineer pursuant to section 4 of this act  
22 from persons willing to retire those groundwater rights in  
23 groundwater basins where:

24 (a) An order issued by the State Engineer precludes the  
25 issuance of permits for new appropriations of groundwater in the  
26 groundwater basin; ~~and~~ or

27 (b) The retirement of groundwater rights in the groundwater  
28 basin meets any purpose set forth in subsection 1.

29 3. The Director shall document in writing the purpose of  
30 each ~~vested~~ adjudicated or certificated groundwater right that is  
31 purchased by  
32 or donated to the Program and file the written document with the  
33 State Engineer.

34 4. When sufficient money is available in the Account for  
35 Retiring Water Rights created by section 9 of this act, the Director  
36 may accept applications for the purchase and retirement of vested  
or certificated groundwater rights.

5. The Director shall not accept donations or applications for  
the purchase and retirement of ~~vested~~ adjudicated or certificated  
groundwater rights after June 30, 2035.

1       **Sec. 21.** Section 10 of this act is hereby amended to read as  
2 follows:

3       Sec. 10. 1. The Nevada Voluntary Water Rights  
4 Retirement Program is hereby established in the Nevada  
5 Conservation and Recreation Program created by section 8 of  
6 this act to purchase and retire adjudicated ~~vested~~ or  
certificated

7 groundwater rights from willing sellers and to accept  
8 donations of groundwater rights for retirement in order to:

- 9       (a) Protect the natural resources of this State;  
10       (b) Address declining levels of groundwater; or  
11       (c) Address conflicts with existing rights or with  
12 protectable interests in existing domestic wells.

13       2. The Nevada Voluntary Water Rights Retirement  
14 Program must be administered by the Director. ~~He~~  
15 ~~administering the Program, the Director shall, to the extent~~  
16 ~~money is available in the Account for Retiring Water Rights~~  
17 ~~created by section 9 of this act, identify and purchase vested~~  
18 ~~or certificated groundwater rights for retirement by the State~~  
19 ~~Engineer pursuant to section 4 of this act from persons~~  
20 ~~willing to retire those groundwater rights in groundwater~~  
21 ~~basins where:~~

22 ~~—(a) An order issued by the State Engineer precludes the~~  
23 ~~issuance of permits for new appropriations of groundwater in~~  
24 ~~the groundwater basin; and~~

25 ~~—(b) The retirement of groundwater rights in the~~  
26 ~~groundwater basin meets any purpose set forth in~~  
27 ~~subsection 1.]~~

28       3. ~~[The Director shall document in writing the purpose~~  
29 ~~of each vested or certificated groundwater right that is~~  
30 ~~purchased by or donated to the Program and file the written~~  
31 ~~document with the State Engineer.~~

32 ~~—4. When sufficient money is available in the Account for~~  
33 ~~Retiring Water Rights created by section 9 of this act, the~~  
34 ~~Director may accept applications for the purchase and~~  
35 ~~retirement of vested or certificated groundwater rights.~~

36 ~~—5.]~~ The Director shall not accept donations or  
37 applications for the purchase and retirement of vested or  
38 certificated groundwater rights after June 30, 2035.

1       **Sec. 21.3.** ~~The Conservation of Colorado River Water Act,~~  
2 ~~being chapter 364, Statutes of Nevada 2021, at page 2179, is hereby~~  
3 ~~amended by adding thereto a new section to be designated as section~~  
4 ~~42, immediately following section 41, to read as follows:~~

5       ~~If the Southern Nevada Water Authority or a member~~  
6 ~~agency of the Southern Nevada Water Authority charges an~~  
7 ~~excessive use fee to a residential customer who exceeds~~  
8 ~~thresholds on water usage, the Southern Nevada Water~~  
9 ~~Authority or member agency, as applicable, may use the~~  
10 ~~proceeds of the fee for programs to assist the customer,~~  
11 ~~including, without limitation, programs:~~

12       ~~1. To repair water leaks on or appurtenant to the~~  
13 ~~property of the residential customer;~~

14       ~~2. To pay 100 percent of the cost for a residential~~  
15 ~~customer with an existing septic system to abandon the~~  
16 ~~septic system and connect to a municipal water system;~~

17       ~~3. To plant trees in the community to combat urban~~  
18 ~~heat island effects;~~

19       ~~4. To provide financial assistance to low-income~~  
20 ~~residential customers for the payment of water bills; or~~

21       ~~5. For any other purpose to protect the water supply of~~  
22 ~~the community, as determined by the Southern Nevada~~  
23 ~~Water Authority or member agency, as applicable.~~

1       **Sec. 25.** 1. This section, sections 1 to 20, inclusive, and  
2 sections 21.3 to 24, inclusive, of this act become effective on July 1,  
3 2025.

4       2. Sections 9, 11, 12 ~~and 14~~ of this act expire by limitation on  
20 June 30, 2035.

21       3. Section 21 of this act becomes effective on July 1, 2035.