



TO: Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining
FROM: Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club, Laura Richards
RE: Support for AJR7
DATE: April 8, 2019

On behalf of more than 30,000 Sierra Club members and supporters in Nevada, we are grateful for your leadership in introducing Assembly Joint Resolution No. 7. We strongly support this bill.

Our members are very concerned about the Fallon Range Training Complex proposed expansion and the closure of hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands in northern Nevada. While we understand the Navy's need to modernize its training facility, providing important protections for wildlife resources and public access is essential. Together, the landscapes included in the military's proposed expansion make up an ecologically rich and vast complex of public lands for wildlife, outdoor recreation and are important for rural economies. The expansion would permanently preclude wilderness designations, close public access, and threaten important wildlife habitat, cultural, historic and scenic values.

The Navy's preferred alternative would eliminate portions of three wilderness study areas and portions of the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge. Instead of eliminating 74,400 acres of Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) as part of the Dixie Valley Training Area, the military should support permanent protection as Wilderness for all of the WSAs within or very close to this area including the Clan Alpine Mountains, Job Peak, Stillwater Range and the Desatoya Mountains WSAs. Wilderness designation would provide a more complete buffer for the military actions, allow for continued public access, and be protected in perpetuity.

The Navy also should adjust their boundary proposals to exclude the 3,200 acres of the Fallon National Wildlife Refuge. The 17,848-acre refuge was established by a Congressional Act in 1931 to "...provide a sanctuary and breeding ground for birds and other wildlife". In addition, the proposed range expansion near the Stillwater Wildlife Refuge could be disruptive to migratory bird nesting and should have at a minimum seasonal closures to protect nesting.

Sportsmen have spent thousands of dollars and volunteer hours with the Nevada Department of Wildlife for years to reintroduce herds of bighorn sheep and to improve habitat for wildlife that now thrive in much of the proposed expansion area.

Simultaneously in southern Nevada, the Air Force is proposing the expansion of the Nevada Test and Training Range in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. Together, the proposed combined withdrawal of public land by the Air Force and Navy include nearly 2 million acres in Nevada, and the cumulative effects of this impact have not been addressed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Richards". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Richards
Executive Committee Member, Toiyabe Chapter