



March 10, 2021

TO: Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
RE: Support for A.J.R.3

Chair Watts and members of the Committee, my name is Laura Richards, a volunteer member of the Club's Legislative Committee and a retired wildlife biologist with the State of Nevada. On behalf the Sierra Club and our more than 30,000 members and supporters state-wide, I am speaking in support of A.J.R.3.

Public lands, waters and forests are spaces that protect the health of people, wildlife, and the planet. These places are under threat and are disappearing. Every year in the United States, we lose a million acres of nature to development. With the existential threat of climate change and one million species at risk of extinction around the world, we need bold actions such as AJR3 to combat this. Scientists tell us that in order to combat extinction and climate change, we need to protect 30% of the US's lands and waters by 2030.

In Nevada, we have seen more intense wildfires, dangerous droughts, and loss of habitat due to sprawl and development, all of which is resulting in degradation of rangelands, forests, and unsafe air quality that takes a toll on human health, the economy, and environment. We have a moral and societal duty to stop the climate crisis for future generations. Conserving more nature will make our communities healthier and safer, both now and in the future.

Although this resolution mandates no on-the-ground protections, it is an important call for action, urging the U.S. Congress, Governor Sisolak, and federal, state, and local agencies to work cooperatively to protect 30% of Nevada's lands and waters by 2030.

This resolution is Nevada's first step in doing our part in creating a vision to protect nature and combat the climate crisis. To reach this ambitious goal, we encourage Nevada lawmakers to urge the federal government to use all conservation measures available including new National Monuments, Wildlife Refuges and Wilderness Study Areas. Sections of the resolution call specifically for the protection of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge and the proposed Avi Kwa Ame National Monument. We also urge prioritizing conservation efforts of Tribal Nations, towns and cities, and landowners.

For the reasons above, we urge you to support this bill.

Thank you.