

2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



NEVADA CONSERVATION LEAGUE



NEVADA CONSERVATION NETWORK

*Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Battle Born Progress
Chispa Nevada
Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife
Environment Nevada
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
Get Outdoors Nevada
Great Basin Resource Watch
Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful
League to Save Lake Tahoe
Moms Clean Air Force
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nevada Conservation League
Nevada Wildlife Federation
Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club
Trout Unlimited
Southwest Energy Efficiency Project
State Innovation Exchange
Vote Solar
Western Resource Advocates*

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MINING REVENUE REFORM

The Need: In many states, especially in the West, extractive industries compensate the state for the value of the natural resource that is taken from the land. As a result, many important programs are funded in these states from these revenues. Nevada receives significantly less for the value of minerals extracted in our state, in some cases receiving nothing at all, while out of state corporations make a profit. The time has come for a fair and modern mine tax to adequately compensate Nevada for our natural resources and the impacts to our lands and water.

The Legislation: In order to increase the amount of revenue to the state from mining we need to address the constitutional cap on net proceeds of minerals. There are currently three proposals that passed the 32nd (2020) Special Session that will likely come back for debate in 2021 before ultimately one makes it to the ballot in 2022. The state should advance the proposal that offers the best chance for increased revenue from mining operations to directly address the issue of Nevada's underfunded essential services.

The Benefits: The state's financial health impacts our ability to implement programs that support the environment and hold bad actors accountable. An increase in revenue to the state makes it possible to better fund environmental justice and conservation programs alongside other programs that all people in the state depend on.

REDUCE SMOG POLLUTION

The Need: Because of a loophole in the law, tens of thousands of cars are using the "Classic Car" designation to avoid smog checks, emitting more dangerous toxins into our air and impacting our communities. In nearly all cases, these vehicles are gross polluters, which often account for more than half of the particulate pollution from the light duty sector.

The Legislation: This legislation will close the smog check program loopholes and will modify state emissions fees to fund smog repair programs and low-income EV incentives in Clark & Washoe counties.

The Benefits: Closing this loophole, and using the funding to repair faulty vehicles or replace them with clean electric alternatives, would improve air quality, particularly in low-income communities and communities of color, who would be the primary targets for this incentive program.



RESPONSIBLE ENERGY PLANNING

The Need: Long-term, Nevada needs to electrify buildings if it is to meet climate goals, using newer, efficient electric technology like heat pumps instead of gas water heaters and furnaces. Investments in gas pipes need to be amortized over 60 years, so continued investment in the gas system creates a bill that future Nevadans will pay. But current Nevada law actually encourages gas expansion: utilities have no obligation to justify their expansion plans relative to future costs or Nevada's climate goals. In contrast to electric utilities, whose big investments must be shown to be the best option for customers, the gas utility planning statute is a mere reporting requirement.

The Legislation: This legislation would establish an Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) process for gas companies to provide long term planning and transparency on new gas infrastructure and replacement, evaluate new investment against lower carbon options like electrification, and to make future investments align with state carbon reduction goals.

The Benefits: The first rule when you are in a hole is to stop digging, and this bill would scrutinize gas utility investments to make sure we are not making investments we will soon regret. This bill will protect gas ratepayers and ensure that any investments made are in line with the state's climate goals.

WILDLIFE CONSIDERATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Need: Like any other type of development, urban development and the associated infrastructure can consume and fragment habitat; cut off migration corridors; and impact the quality of the remaining habitat, including the air and water. However, with thoughtful planning informed by consultation with experts and relying on the best available science, many of these impacts can be avoided, minimized or mitigated.

The Legislation: A bill to require developers to consult with the Nevada Department of Wildlife on significant development proposals or plans; to avoid impacts to wildlife, and to minimize and mitigate impacts when avoidance is not feasible; and to state the impacts to wildlife and habitat as part of the proposal or plan. The permitting authority would be able and encouraged to take this information into account when deciding whether to approve the proposal.

The Benefits: This would be the first step towards encouraging developers to avoid impacts to wildlife and habitat. The most significant benefits would come from enforcing any avoid/minimize requirements and from any public pressure and loss of social license to build in a location or manner that impacts wildlife.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY REFORM

The Need: In 2017, the legislature passed several bills dealing with energy efficiency: SB150, which required the PUCN to set energy efficiency targets that apply to electric utility companies, and AB223, which earmarked a portion of the energy efficiency program's budget for programs directed at low-income customers. Unfortunately, our main electric utility has failed to devote adequate attention and resources to the management and planning of these energy efficiency efforts and has generally neglected the low-income programs.

The Legislation: A bill to establish mandatory energy efficiency goals, raise the low-income program target, and allow the Public Utilities Commission to designate an independent 3rd party administrator to run utility energy efficiency programs.

The Benefits: Expanding the programs that make it cheaper and easier for utility customers to save energy is critical to reducing emissions to meet Nevada's goals. Saving energy saves money, and reduces the need to disturb Nevada's land for new renewables.

