

CONTACT

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Dear Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Jermareon Williams, and I am the Nevada Government Affairs Manager for Western Resource Advocates (WRA). WRA is a regional nonprofit advocacy organization fighting today's most pressing conservation challenges to sustain the environment, economies, and people of the West. I am writing today on behalf of WRA to provide support for AB 108, which seeks to provide funding for the Outdoor Education and Recreation Grant Program.

Nevada offers some of the West's most scenic and unique landscapes and provides its residents and visitors with abundant opportunities to experience the beauty of its lands, waters, and wildlife. However, many Nevada youth don't enjoy equal access to all that state has to offer. Many communities face barriers to accessing the great outdoors, like distance from natural areas, limited transportation options, and equipment costs, and local parks often don't receive the necessary funding to be properly maintained.

During the 2023 legislative session, legislators unanimously voted to provide a one-time allocation of \$500,000 for the Outdoor Education and Recreation Grant Program over a two-year period. This investment allowed the state to support organizations providing outdoor experiences for children across the state, thus reducing barriers to the outdoors for many communities. The grant program proved so successful, in two years the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation received \$2.5 million in asks, four-times the available funding.

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In 2025, AB 108 would make an appropriation of \$1 million over the next biennium to continue to support this popular program. This initiative is modeled after successful programs in 13 other states, including our neighbors in Utah, Idaho, and Colorado. Access to public spaces should not depend on income level. All children should be able to enjoy and benefit from all that the outdoors has to offer.

AB 108 isn't just a feel-good initiative. [Studies](#) show that children who have more outdoor experiences have better educational outcomes, are more playful and curious, and experience less stress and anxiety. Beyond the public health benefits, fostering youth connection to nature is critical to supporting the longevity of the state's nearly \$5 billion outdoor recreation economy. Investment in Nevada's next generation isn't just the right thing to do, it's good business.

WRA would like to thank Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui and Speaker Steve Yeager for sponsoring this bill. WRA strongly supports AB 108 because it will ensure that Nevada can capitalize on the amazing work done by the Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation to

ensure that organizations looking to provide outdoor experiences to children across the state can continue to do so.

Thank you,

Jermareon Williams

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Government Affairs Manager