



Northern Nevada Office
639 Isbell Rd., #330
Reno, NV 89509

Southern Nevada Office
8215 S. Eastern Ave., #225
Las Vegas, NV 89123

Tel (775) 322-4990

Tel (702) 737-8744

nature.org/nevada

Assemblymember Shea Backus, Chair
Assembly Committee on Revenue
Transmitted via email: AsmREV@asm.state.nv.us

April 1, 2025

Re: Assembly Bill 479 support letter

Dear Chair Backus and Members of the Revenue Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) strongly supports Assembly Bill 479 (AB 479) that defines the term “agrivoltaics” and clarifies that it is an agricultural land use. For over 40 years, TNC has been working in Nevada with a mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. TNC supports transitioning to renewable energy resources, but also recognizes that this can be a challenge in a state where over three-quarters of the land is undeveloped federally managed public land. Nevada has a disproportionate supply of the ingredients needed for this transition, so we support a smart-from-the-start approach that accelerates such projects while maximizing conservation values and promoting economic development and stability in Nevada.

Accelerating renewable energy development on already disturbed lands is a principle of smart-from-the-start energy planning because it conserves lands for wildlife, tribal cultural values, and recreational opportunities, while also retaining nature-based carbon sequestration and extreme heat mitigation. Agricultural land that can also be used for solar energy generation is a good example of the benefits gained by avoiding or minimizing impacts to undisturbed lands while also providing for income diversification.

Another aspect of agrivoltaics is its ability to help with preserving the socioeconomic structure of rural communities as they address declining water availability by reducing irrigated agriculture in Nevada. We did a study in Diamond Valley where there is a mandated groundwater management plan that will result in land coming out of irrigated production, and a frequent question is about what to do with the land once it’s no longer irrigated. Our study found that Diamond Valley is suitable for incorporating agrivoltaics with little to no irrigation, which could preserve the agricultural culture of the community, diversify income, and reduce groundwater use (Saito et al. 2024).

The provisions in this bill will encourage the application of agrivoltaics in Nevada and help maintain communities as they adapt to pressures for renewable energy development and changes in irrigated agriculture. We thank the committee for hearing this bill. Please don’t hesitate to contact Dr. Laurel Saito, Nevada Water Strategy Director (laurel.saito@tnc.org; 775-453-6903) or Dr. Kerry Rohrmeier, Nevada Climate and Energy Strategy Director (kerry.rohrmeier@tnc.org; 775-246-0281) if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,



Mauricia M.M. Baca
State Director
Nevada Chapter
The Nature Conservancy

Reference:

Saito L, Tibbitts J, Gower P, Zimmerman G, McHugh D. 2024. Resolving groundwater overuse: Feasibility of agrivoltaics coupled with groundwater rights retirement. The Nature Conservancy, Eureka Conservation District and Eureka County. 48 pages. Available at <https://www.eurekacountynv.gov/departments/natural-resources/feasibility-of-agrivoltaics-coupled-with-groundwater-rights-retirement-study/>.