

May 1, 2025

To: Chair Orenschall and Members of the Nevada Senate Legislative Operations and Elections Committee

From: Jackie Spicer, Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition

RE: AJR 10 Urges the Federal Government to release federally managed land - OPPOSE

Dear Chair Orenschall and Members of the Nevada Senate Legislative Operations and Elections Committee,

On behalf of the Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition, we are respectfully opposing AJR10 today, just as many of our coalition members and allies have opposed the Southern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act on a federal level for the last six years.^{1 2}

At a time when climate scientists tell us we have less than a decade to take action to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, this proposed expansion will only make matters worse if urban development continues as it has in the past, without consideration of climate-resiliency or the impacts on frontline communities.

This Act will lead to urban sprawl by opening up public lands for developers. Sprawl increases the distance between homes, businesses, services and jobs, which raises the cost of providing infrastructure and public services.³ Sprawling cities have more heat-related deaths than highly dense cities,⁴ and Clark County saw 526 deaths from extreme heat last year alone.⁵ Las Vegas already grapples with some of the consequences of unsustainable growth, and tens of thousands of acres of new sprawl development will lead to:

¹ Nevada Climate Justice Coalition. (2020, January 13). It's Time To Get Serious About Climate Change, Starting with The Southern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act. DocumentCloud. <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6656217-NCJC-ClarkCounty-Climate-Letter-011320.html>

² Environmental justice organizations in Nevada. (2024, November). Letter to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in response to SNEDCA. https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vSaPQR7ScjgY-W54upusbp2UkgT0IMWUlu7CEjxcG_KiNf-47CZaC9CyPd9a0L2InlVP-8TvGkG3R0D/pub

³ Litman, T. (2015, June 1). Urban sprawl costs the American economy more than \$1 trillion annually. Smart growth policies may be the answer. LSE USAPP. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2015/06/01/urban-sprawl-costs-the-american-economy-more-than-1-trillion-annually-smart-growth-policies-may-be-the-answer/>

⁴ Stone, B., Hess, J. J., & Frumkin, H. (2010). Urban form and extreme heat events: Are sprawling cities more vulnerable to climate change than compact cities? *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 118(10), 1425–1428. <https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp.0901879>

⁵ Hudspeth, C. (2025, February 5). *Clark County reports 526 heat-related deaths for 2024, but the number could still grow*. KTNV. <https://www.ktnv.com/news/clark-county-reports-526-heat-related-deaths-for-2024-but-the-number-could-still-grow>

- Increased carbon emissions and air pollution from more personal vehicle usage and more indoor air conditioning usage⁶
- Increased urban heat island effect from more pavement, building, and low-density rooftops⁷
- Perpetuating historical housing inequities by creating new residential areas, without public transportation, that are only accessible to wealthy residents.⁸
- Diverting County resources from improvements in existing low-income communities to community improvements in new, outlying areas.

In addition, the claim that this Act will lead to more affordable housing options is not guaranteed. We echo the concerns raised by Congresswoman Dina Titus in her address to the Nevada Legislature two weeks ago that there are serious concerns with this bill.⁹

We envision a future where infill development of our existing neighborhoods is prioritized. This vision is supported by the RTC of Southern Nevada's 2025 Underutilized Lands Inventory Report, which found nearly 80,000 acres of vacant or underutilized land within the existing growth boundary that could be developed instead.¹⁰ This bill is a giveaway to rich developers while frontline communities continue to be economically marginalized by existing policies.

By enabling urban sprawl beyond the existing boundary, this bill risks worsening climate impacts, increasing resource strain, and deepening social inequities.

We appreciate the committee's consideration of our comments. When our mission is to liberate frontline communities from environmental hardship, we cannot ignore the consequences of sacrificing communities within the urban heat islands for unchecked sprawl.

⁶ Mooney, Chris. (2018). Scientists just showed what building a new suburb does to the atmosphere. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2018/03/08/scientists-just-showed-what-building-new-suburbs-does-to-the-atmosphere/>

⁷ Hsu, A., Sheriff, G., Chakraborty, T. et al. Disproportionate exposure to urban heat island intensity across major US cities. *Nat Commun* 12, 2721 (2021). <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-021-22799-5>

⁸ Power, Anne. (2001). Social Exclusion and Urban Sprawl: Is the Rescue of Cities Possible?. *Regional Studies*. 35. 731-742. 10.1080/00343400120084713.

⁹ Lyle, M. (2025, April 25). Titus rips bill that 'doesn't do anything about affordable housing'. *Nevada Current*. <https://nevadacurrent.com/2025/04/25/titus-rips-bill-that-doesnt-do-anything-about-affordable-housing/>

¹⁰ Southern Nevada Strong. (2025, March). Underutilized Lands Inventory: Identifying Vacant and Underutilized Parcels in Urbanized Clark County. https://www.southernnevadastrong.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2025_SNS_Underutilized_Lands_Report-Final.pdf