

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 3—Committee on
Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining

FILE NUMBER.....

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION—Expressing the intent of the Legislature to establish a biomass industry to restore certain ecosystems on public lands.

WHEREAS, The Nevada Pinyon-Juniper Partnership estimates that currently 9 million acres of Nevada’s landscape is pinyon-juniper woodlands, with over 100,000 acres each year converting to the highest density of pinyon-juniper; and

WHEREAS, Such expanding, aging, overgrown pinyon-juniper woodlands adversely affect ecosystem health with increased disease and insect infestations, negatively impact wildlife diversity by crowding out herbaceous vegetation and shrubs such as sagebrush, and are highly susceptible to catastrophic fire, which adversely affects watersheds and causes erosion; and

WHEREAS, Environmentally sound and scientifically based proactive management of the expansion and overgrowth of pinyon-juniper stands may reduce fire suppression and restoration costs, reduce the introduction of invasive species such as cheat grass that are detrimental to the ecosystem, enhance the wildlife habitat for sagebrush obligate species such as greater sage grouse and mule deer, improve watershed health and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire by reducing high fuel loads; and

WHEREAS, Biomass from pinyon-juniper management may be used for commercial purposes, including the production of renewable energy and wood products, and the promotion of those uses may strengthen communities by creating rural industries and jobs in counties whose private sector economies are affected by the dominant presence of public lands; and

WHEREAS, The Nevada Legislature recognizes the cultural importance of pinyon-juniper woodlands to Native Americans and the need for thorough consultation with tribal governments when woodland management projects are planned; and

WHEREAS, The Nevada Legislature recognizes that pinyon-juniper treatments on public land may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq., thereby requiring public input and participation; and

WHEREAS, The federal Stewardship End Result Contracting program, most recently authorized by section 323 of Public Law No. 108-7 and set to expire on September 30, 2013, if extended by the United States Congress, may provide a valuable resource by



facilitating agreements with private contractors for treatment and management of pinyon-juniper woodlands that would benefit rural communities, ecosystem resilience and rangeland health; and

WHEREAS, It is the policy of this State to encourage participation with all levels of government and private enterprise in cooperative state, regional and national programs to assure adequate supplies of energy resources and wood products and markets for those energy sources and wood products; and

WHEREAS, The Nevada Legislature encourages both government and private enterprise to maximize the use of indigenous energy resources and wood products to the extent such use is environmentally sound and competitively and economically feasible; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AND SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, JOINTLY, That the Nevada Legislature hereby expresses its intent to establish and encourage the creation of a biomass industry in Nevada to expand efforts to manage pinyon-juniper woodlands and restore pinyon-juniper and sagebrush ecosystems at a landscape scale on public lands based on sound scientific principles for the benefit of ecosystem resiliency, economic stability, production of biomass energy and wood products, hydrologic function, rangeland health, wildlife habitat and reduction of hazardous fuels; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Nevada Legislature hereby encourages the Congress of the United States to extend the authority of the Bureau of Land Management of the United States Department of the Interior and the United States Forest Service under section 323 of Public Law No. 108-7 to enter into stewardship contracts or agreements for management and restoration projects on public lands beyond the current expiration date, and to extend the maximum length of those stewardship contracts or agreements to 20 years; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly prepare and transmit a copy of this resolution to the Governor, the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States as the presiding officer of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, each member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management and the Chief of the United States Forest Service; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this resolution becomes effective upon passage.

