ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 378-COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

MARCH 23, 2021

Referred to Committee on Government Affairs

SUMMARY—Revises various provisions relating to public lands. (BDR 26-718)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.

Effect on the State: No.

EXPLANATION - Matter in bolded italics is new; matter between brackets fomitted material] is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to public lands; revising the purpose of the State Land Office; eliminating provisions relating to the State providing land use planning assistance in areas of critical environmental concern; revising provisions relating to the duties of the State Land Use Planning Agency; repealing various provisions relating to public lands; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Existing law creates the State Land Office for the purpose of selecting and disposing of certain lands granted by the United States to the State of Nevada. (NRS 321.010) **Section 1** of this bill provides, instead, that the purpose of the State Land Office is for selecting and managing such lands.

Existing law provides that it is the intent of the Legislature to limit the participation of the State in land use planning to certain activities. (NRS 321.640) **Section 2** of this bill removes language that allowed the participation of the State in land use planning to include providing land use planning assistance in areas of critical environmental concern when directed by the Governor or requested by local governments.

Section 3 of this bill eliminates the definitions of "areas of critical environmental concern" and "public lands" for purposes of state planning for the use of certain lands.

Existing law designates the Division of State Lands of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as the State Land Use Planning Agency and sets forth various duties and responsibilities of the Agency. (NRS 321.640-321.770) **Section 5** of this bill eliminates from the list of priorities of the Agency: (1) activities relating to federal lands in this State; and (2) investigation and review of proposals for the designation of areas of critical environmental concern and the development of standards and plans therefor.

Section 6 of this bill revises the duties of the Administrator of the Division of State Lands with respect to the State Land Use Planning Agency to remove the





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requirement that the Administrator provide assistance to counties in developing programs to increase the responsibility of local governments for the management of lands in the State that are under federal management.

Section 7 of this bill revises the duties of the State Land Use Planning Agency concerning the purchase by the Federal Government of private land or the exchange of public land for private land to remove the requirement that the State Land Use Planning Agency include comments received from the governing body of an affected county or city in any written comments submitted by the State Land Use Planning Agency to the Federal Government.

Section 8 of this bill removes from the duties of the State Land Use Planning Agency the duty to: (1) prepare plans concerning the acquisition and use of lands in the State that are under federal management; and (2) identify lands that are suitable for acquisition. Sections 9, 11 and 12 make conforming changes to remove references to such plans.

Section 14 of this bill repeals various provisions relating to public lands, including provisions: (1) creating the Board of Review to review regulations, decisions and plans or statements of policy of the State Registrar and State Land Use Planning Agency; (2) directing the management of certain public lands; (3) creating the Public Land Trust Fund; (4) authorizing the State Land Use Planning Agency to represent interests of certain entities that are affected by policies and activities involving the use of federal law; and (5) setting forth procedures for state consent to the federal use of public lands. Section 14 also repeals language declaring the intent of the State to seek the acquisition of lands retained by the Federal Government within the borders of the State.

Sections 4, 10 and 13 make conforming changes to remove references to these repealed provisions.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. NRS 321.010 is hereby amended to read as follows: 321.010 1. For the purpose of selecting and [disposing of] *managing* the lands granted by the United States to the State of Nevada, including the 16th and 36th sections, and those selected in lieu thereof, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the several grants of land by the United States to the State of Nevada, a State Land Office is hereby created.

- 2. The Administrator as executive head of the Division is the ex officio State Land Registrar.
- 3. The State Land Registrar may appoint one Deputy State Land Registrar and such technical, clerical and operational staff as the execution of the duties of the State Land Registrar and the operation of the State Land Office may require.
 - **Sec. 2.** NRS 321.640 is hereby amended to read as follows: 321.640 The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:
- 1. It is in the public interest to place the primary authority for the planning process with the local governments, which are closest to the people;





- 2. Unregulated growth and development of the State will result in harm to the public safety, health, comfort, convenience, resources and general welfare;
- 3. The cities of the State have a responsibility for guiding the development of areas within their respective boundaries for the common good, and the counties have similar responsibilities with respect to their unincorporated areas;
- 4. City, county, regional and other planning must be done in harmony to ensure the orderly growth and preservation of the State; and
- 5. State participation in land use planning should be limited to coordination of information and data, the acquisition and use of federal lands within the State [, providing land use planning assistance in areas of critical environmental concern when directed by the Governor or requested by local governments,] and providing assistance in resolving inconsistencies between the land use plans of local governmental entities when requested to do so by one of the entities.
- **Sec. 3.** NRS 321.655 is hereby amended to read as follows: 321.655 As used in NRS 321.640 to [321.770,] 321.763, inclusive:
 - 1. "Administrator" means the executive head of the Division.
- 2. ["Area of critical environmental concern" means any area in this State where there is or could develop irreversible degradation of more than local significance but does not include an area of depleting water supply which is caused by the beneficial use or storage of water in other areas pursuant to legally owned and fully appropriated water rights.
- "Planning agency" means:
- (a) The planning commission for the city in which the land is entirely located; or
- (b) A county or regional planning commission, if there is one, or the board of county commissioners or Nevada Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, within whose jurisdiction the land is located.
- [4. "Public lands" means all lands within the exterior boundaries of the State of Nevada except lands:
- (a) To which title is held by any private person or entity;
- (b) To which title is held by the State of Nevada, any of its local governments or the Nevada System of Higher Education;
- 40 (c) Which are located within congressionally authorized national
 41 parks, monuments, national forests or wildlife refuges, or which are
 42 lands acquired by purchase consented to by the Legislature;
 - (d) Which are controlled by the United States Department of Defense, Department of Energy or Bureau of Reclamation; or





— (e) Which are held in trust for Indian purposes or are Indian reservations.]

Sec. 4. NRS 321.700 is hereby amended to read as follows:

321.700 In addition to any other functions assigned to it by law, the Division is hereby designated as the State Land Use Planning Agency for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of NRS 321.640 to [321.770,] 321.763, inclusive, and fulfilling any land use planning requirements arising under federal law.

Sec. 5. NRS 321.710 is hereby amended to read as follows:

321.710 1. The Administrator shall administer the activities of the State Land Use Planning Agency. The Administrator has authority and responsibility for the development and distribution of information useful to land use planning.

2. The [activities of the] State Land Use Planning Agency [which have priority are:

(a) Provision of shall provide technical assistance to a county or city in areas where such assistance is requested. [;

(b) Activities relating to federal lands in this State; and

- (c) Investigation and review of proposals for designation of areas of critical environmental concern and the development of standards and plans therefor.]
- 3. In addition to the assistant provided by subsection 3 of NRS 321.010 the Administrator may appoint, subject to the availability of money, such professional, technical, administrative, clerical and other persons as the Administrator may require for assistance in performing his or her land use planning duties.
 - **Sec. 6.** NRS 321.720 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 321.720 1. The Administrator shall develop and make available to cities and counties information useful to land use planning, including:
- (a) Preparation and continuing revision of a statewide inventory of the land and natural resources of the State:
- (b) Preparation and continuing revision of an inventory of state, local government and private needs and priorities concerning the acquisition and use of federal lands within the State;
- (c) Preparation and continuing revision of an inventory of public and private institutional and financial resources available for land use planning and management within the State and of state and local programs and activities which have a land use impact of more than local concern;
- (d) Provision, where appropriate, of technical assistance and training programs for state and local agency personnel concerned with the development and implementation of state and local land use programs;





- (e) Coordination and exchange of land use planning information and data among state agencies and local governments, with the Federal Government, among the several states and interstate agencies, and with members of the public, including conducting of public hearings, preparation of reports and soliciting of comments on reports concerning information useful to land use planning;
- (f) Coordination of planning for state and local acquisition and use of federal lands within the State, except that in the case of a plan which utilizes both federal and private lands the governing body of the area where private lands are to be utilized has final authority to approve the proposal; *and*
- (g) [Provision of assistance to counties to develop programs to increase the responsibility of local governments for the management of lands in the State of Nevada that are under federal management; and
- (h)] Consideration of, and consultation with, the relevant states on the interstate aspects of land use issues of more than local concern.
 - 2. To the extent practicable, the Administrator shall:
- (a) Compile any information developed pursuant to subsection 1; and
 - (b) Make the compilation available to cities and counties.
 - **Sec. 7.** NRS 321.7353 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 321.7353 1. Upon receipt of a notice of realty action from the United States concerning the purchase by the Federal Government of private land or the exchange of public land for private land, the State Land Use Planning Agency shall give written notice of the proposed action to the governing body of each county or city affected within 1 week after its receipt of the notice.
- 2. The governing body of each affected county or city may, in addition to submission of comments directly to the Federal Government, deliver its written comments on the proposed realty action, including an estimation of any related reduction in the total assessed valuation of the real property within the jurisdiction of the local government and recommendations for mitigation of the loss of assessed valuation, to the State Land Use Planning Agency within 30 days after receipt of the notice.
- [3. If the State Land Use Planning Agency elects to submit written comment to the Federal Government upon the realty action, it shall include in its submission any comments it received pursuant to subsection 2.]
 - **Sec. 8.** NRS 321.7355 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 321.7355 1. The State Land Use Planning Agency [shall] may prepare, in cooperation with appropriate federal and state agencies and local governments throughout the State, [plans or]





statements of policy concerning the [acquisition and use] *administration* of lands in the State of Nevada that are under federal management.

- 2. [The State Land Use Planning Agency shall, in preparing the plans and statements of policy, identify lands which are suitable for acquisition for:
- (a) Commercial, industrial or residential development;
- (b) The expansion of the property tax base, including the potential for an increase in revenue by the lease and sale of those lands; or
- (c) Accommodating increases in the population of this State.
- The plans or statements of policy must not include matters concerning zoning or the division of land and must be consistent with local plans and regulations concerning the use of private property.
 - —3.] The State Land Use Planning Agency shall:
- (a) Encourage public comment upon the various matters treated in a proposed [plan or] statement of policy throughout its preparation and incorporate such comments into the proposed [plan or] statement of policy as are appropriate;
- (b) Submit its work on a [plan or] statement of policy periodically for review and comment by the Land Use Planning Advisory Council and any committees of the Legislature or subcommittees of the Legislative Commission that deal with matters concerning the public lands; and
- (c) Provide written responses to written comments received from a county or city upon the various matters treated in a proposed [plan or] statement of policy.
- [4.] 3. Whenever the State Land Use Planning Agency prepares [plans or] statements of policy pursuant to subsection 1 and submits those [plans or policy] statements of policy to the Governor, Legislature or an agency of the Federal Government, the State Land Use Planning Agency shall include with each [plan or] statement of policy the comments and recommendations of:
 - (a) The Land Use Planning Advisory Council; and
- (b) Any committees of the Legislature or subcommittees of the Legislative Commission that deal with matters concerning the public lands.
- [5.] 4. A [plan or] statement of policy must be approved by the governing bodies of the county and cities affected by it before it is put into effect.
 - **Sec. 9.** NRS 321.750 is hereby amended to read as follows:
 - 321.750 The Land Use Planning Advisory Council shall:





- 1. Advise the Administrator on the development and distribution to cities and counties of information useful to land use planning.
- 2. Advise the State Land Use Planning Agency regarding the development of [plans and] statements of policy pursuant to subsection 1 of NRS 321.7355.
- 3. Work cooperatively with the Attorney General and the Nevada Association of Counties as required pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 405.204.
- **Sec. 10.** NRS 328.065 is hereby amended to read as follows: 328.065 An officer of an agency or instrumentality of the United States:
- 1. May apply to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau pursuant to NRS 328.065 to 328.135, inclusive, to obtain a cession of concurrent criminal jurisdiction or other jurisdiction from the State of Nevada.
- 2. Shall apply to the State Engineer pursuant to Title 48 of NRS to appropriate water on the public lands or other federal lands of this state. The State Engineer has continuing jurisdiction over any acquisition by the United States of the waters of the State of Nevada, whether by purchase, gift, condemnation, appropriation pursuant to the state's water laws or otherwise, and whether appurtenant to lands acquired by or retained by the United States.
- 3. Shall apply to the Department of Transportation pursuant to the procedure set forth in NRS 408.537, 408.543 and 408.547 for consent to close a public road, as defined in NRS 405.191, which is located on the public lands of this state.
- [4. Shall apply to the State Land Use Planning Agency pursuant to the procedure set forth in NRS 321.736 to 321.739, inclusive, for consent to use land held solely for proprietary purposes relating to the retention and management of the public lands, if that use interferes with the sovereignty of this state respecting the land within its borders.]
 - **Sec. 11.** NRS 218E.520 is hereby amended to read as follows: 218E.520 1. The Committee may:
 - (a) Review and comment on any administrative policy, rule or regulation of the:
- (1) Secretary of the Interior which pertains to policy concerning or management of public lands under the control of the Federal Government; and
- (2) Secretary of Agriculture which pertains to policy concerning or management of national forests;
- (b) Conduct investigations and hold hearings in connection with its review, including, but not limited to, investigating the effect on the State, its citizens, political subdivisions, businesses and





industries of those policies, rules, regulations and related laws, and exercise any of the investigative powers set forth in NRS 218E.105 to 218E.140, inclusive;

- (c) Consult with and advise the State Land Use Planning Agency on matters concerning federal land use, policies and activities in this State;
- (d) Direct the Legislative Counsel Bureau to assist in its research, investigations, review and comment;

(e) Recommend to the Legislature as a result of its review any appropriate state legislation or corrective federal legislation;

- (f) Advise the Attorney General if it believes that any federal policy, rule or regulation which it has reviewed encroaches on the sovereignty respecting land or water or their use which has been reserved to the State pursuant to the Constitution of the United States;
- (g) Enter into a contract for consulting services for land planning and any other related activities, including, but not limited to:
- (1) [Advising the Committee and the State Land Use Planning Agency concerning the revision of the plans pursuant to NRS 321.7355:
- (2)] Assisting local governments in the identification of lands administered by the Federal Government in this State which are needed for residential or economic development or any other purpose; and
- [(3)] (2) Assisting local governments in the acquisition of federal lands in this State;
- (h) Apply for any available grants and accept any gifts, grants or donations to assist the Committee in carrying out its duties; and
- (i) Review and comment on any other matter relating to the preservation, conservation, use, management or disposal of public lands deemed appropriate by the Chair of the Committee or by a majority of the members of the Committee.
- 2. Any reference in this section to federal policies, rules, regulations and related federal laws includes those which are proposed as well as those which are enacted or adopted.
 - Sec. 12. NRS 278.160 is hereby amended to read as follows:
- 278.160 1. Except as otherwise provided in this section and NRS 278.150 and 278.170, the master plan, with the accompanying charts, drawings, diagrams, schedules and reports, may include such of the following elements or portions thereof as are appropriate to the city, county or region, and as may be made the basis for the physical development thereof:
 - (a) A conservation element, which must include:





- (1) A conservation plan for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, including, without limitation, water and its hydraulic force, underground water, water supply, solar or wind energy, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals and other natural resources. The conservation plan must also cover the reclamation of land and waters, flood control, prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters, regulation of the use of land in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan, prevention, control and correction of the erosion of soils through proper clearing, grading and landscaping, beaches and shores, and protection of watersheds. The conservation plan must also indicate the maximum tolerable level of air pollution.
- (2) A solid waste disposal plan showing general plans for the disposal of solid waste.
 - (b) A historic preservation element, which must include:
 - (1) A historic neighborhood preservation plan which:
- (I) Must include, without limitation, a plan to inventory historic neighborhoods and a statement of goals and methods to encourage the preservation of historic neighborhoods.
- (II) May include, without limitation, the creation of a commission to monitor and promote the preservation of historic neighborhoods.
- (2) A historical properties preservation plan setting forth an inventory of significant historical, archaeological, paleontological and architectural properties as defined by a city, county or region, and a statement of methods to encourage the preservation of those properties.
 - (c) A housing element, which must include, without limitation:
- (1) An inventory of housing conditions and needs, and plans and procedures for improving housing standards and providing adequate housing to individuals and families in the community, regardless of income level.
- (2) An inventory of existing affordable housing in the community, including, without limitation, housing that is available to rent or own, housing that is subsidized either directly or indirectly by this State, an agency or political subdivision of this State, or the Federal Government or an agency of the Federal Government, and housing that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- (3) An analysis of projected growth and the demographic characteristics of the community.
- (4) A determination of the present and prospective need for affordable housing in the community.





- (5) An analysis of any impediments to the development of affordable housing and the development of policies to mitigate those impediments.
- (6) An analysis of the characteristics of the land that is suitable for residential development. The analysis must include, without limitation:
- (I) A determination of whether the existing infrastructure is sufficient to sustain the current needs and projected growth of the community; and
- (II) An inventory of available parcels that are suitable for residential development and any zoning, environmental and other land-use planning restrictions that affect such parcels.
- (7) An analysis of the needs and appropriate methods for the construction of affordable housing or the conversion or rehabilitation of existing housing to affordable housing.
- (8) A plan for maintaining and developing affordable housing to meet the housing needs of the community for a period of at least 5 years.
 - (d) A land use element, which must include:
- (1) Provisions concerning community design, including standards and principles governing the subdivision of land and suggestive patterns for community design and development.
- (2) A land use plan, including an inventory and classification of types of natural land and of existing land cover and uses, and comprehensive plans for the most desirable utilization of land. The land use plan:
- (I) Must, if applicable, address mixed-use development, transit-oriented development, master-planned communities and gaming enterprise districts. The land use plan must also, if applicable, address the coordination and compatibility of land uses with any military installation in the city, county or region, taking into account the location, purpose and stated mission of the military installation.
- (II) May include a provision concerning the acquisition and use of land that is under federal management within the city, county or region, including, without limitation, a [plan or] statement of policy prepared pursuant to NRS 321.7355.
- (3) In any county whose population is 700,000 or more, a rural neighborhoods preservation plan showing general plans to preserve the character and density of rural neighborhoods.
 - (e) A public facilities and services element, which must include:
- (1) An economic plan showing recommended schedules for the allocation and expenditure of public money to provide for the economical and timely execution of the various components of the plan.





(2) A population plan setting forth an estimate of the total population which the natural resources of the city, county or region will support on a continuing basis without unreasonable impairment.

(3) An aboveground utility plan that shows corridors designated for the construction of aboveground utilities and

complies with the provisions of NRS 278.165.

(4) Provisions concerning public buildings showing the locations and arrangement of civic centers and all other public buildings, including the architecture thereof and the landscape treatment of the grounds thereof.

- (5) Provisions concerning public services and facilities showing general plans for sewage, drainage and utilities, and rights-of-way, easements and facilities therefor, including, without limitation, any utility projects required to be reported pursuant to NRS 278.145. If a public utility which provides electric service notifies the planning commission that a new transmission line or substation will be required to support the master plan, those facilities must be included in the master plan. The utility is not required to obtain an easement for any such transmission line as a prerequisite to the inclusion of the transmission line in the master plan.
- (6) A school facilities plan showing the general locations of current and future school facilities based upon information furnished by the appropriate county school district.
- (f) A recreation and open space element, which must include a recreation plan showing a comprehensive system of recreation areas, including, without limitation, natural reservations, parks, parkways, trails, reserved riverbank strips, beaches, playgrounds and other recreation areas, including, when practicable, the locations and proposed development thereof.
 - (g) A safety element, which must include:
- (1) In any county whose population is 700,000 or more, a safety plan identifying potential types of natural and man-made hazards, including, without limitation, hazards from floods, landslides or fires, or resulting from the manufacture, storage, transfer or use of bulk quantities of hazardous materials. The safety plan may set forth policies for avoiding or minimizing the risks from those hazards.
- (2) A seismic safety plan consisting of an identification and appraisal of seismic hazards such as susceptibility to surface ruptures from faulting, to ground shaking or to ground failures.
 - (h) A transportation element, which must include:
- (1) A streets and highways plan showing the general locations and widths of a comprehensive system of major traffic thoroughfares and other traffic ways and of streets and the





recommended treatment thereof, building line setbacks, and a system of naming or numbering streets and numbering houses, with recommendations concerning proposed changes.

- (2) A transit plan showing a proposed multimodal system of transit lines, including mass transit, streetcar, motorcoach and trolley coach lines, paths for bicycles and pedestrians, satellite parking and related facilities.
- (3) A transportation plan showing a comprehensive transportation system, including, without limitation, locations of rights-of-way, terminals, viaducts and grade separations. The transportation plan may also include port, harbor, aviation and related facilities.
- (i) An urban agricultural element, which must include a plan to inventory any vacant lands owned by the city or county and blighted land in the city or county to determine whether such lands are suitable for urban farming and gardening.
- 2. The commission may prepare and adopt, as part of the master plan, other and additional plans and reports dealing with such other elements as may in its judgment relate to the physical development of the city, county or region, and nothing contained in NRS 278.010 to 278.630, inclusive, prohibits the preparation and adoption of any such element as a part of the master plan.
 - **Sec. 13.** NRS 487.210 is hereby amended to read as follows: 487.210 As used in NRS 487.210 to 487.300, inclusive, unless
- the context otherwise requires:
 - 1. "Abandoned vehicle" means a vehicle:
- (a) If the vehicle is discovered upon public lands, that the owner has discarded.
- (b) If the vehicle is discovered upon public or private property other than public lands:
 - (1) That the owner has discarded; or
- (2) Which has not been reclaimed by the registered owner or a person having a security interest in the vehicle within 15 days after notification pursuant to NRS 487.250.
- 2. "Public lands" [has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 321.5963.] means all lands within the exterior boundaries of the State of Nevada except lands:
 - (a) To which title is held by any private person or entity;
- (b) To which title is held by the State of Nevada, any of its local governments or the Nevada System of Higher Education;
- (c) Which are located within congressionally authorized national parks, monuments, national forests or wildlife refuges or which are lands acquired by purchase consented to by the Legislature;





- (d) Which are controlled by the United States Department of Defense, Department of Energy or Bureau of Reclamation; or
- (e) Which are held in trust for Indian purposes or are Indian reservations.
- **Sec. 14.** NRS 321.00051, 321.596, 321.5963, 321.5967, 321.597, 321.5973, 321.5977, 321.598, 321.5983, 321.5987, 321.599, 321.601, 321.735, 321.736, 321.737, 321.738, 321.739 and 321.770 are hereby repealed.

LEADLINES OF REPEALED SECTIONS

321.00051 Legislative declaration: Acquisition of lands retained by Federal Government.

321.596 Legislative findings.

321.5963 Definitions.

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321.5967 Board of Review: Creation; composition; Chair; meetings; quorum; compensation; duties and powers.

321.597 Division to hold and manage public lands; regulations; employment of personnel.

321.5973 Public lands and minerals are property of State; rights and privileges under federal laws to be preserved; administration of land to conform with treaties and compacts.

321.5977 Objectives in administering public lands.

321.598 Disposal of public lands: Legislative authorization required; State Land Registrar may dispose of lands to same extent and in same manner as Federal Government; deposit of proceeds.

321.5983 Unauthorized disposal of public lands void; State authorization required for use, management or disposal of public lands; injunctions; action to recover consideration received from unlawful disposition of public land.

321.5987 Procedure for appealing decision of State Land Registrar to Board of Review; hearing.

321.599 Enforcement of NRS 321.596 to 321.599, inclusive, by Attorney General.

321.601 Creation; payments to local governments in lieu of taxes on public lands.

321.735 Powers and duties concerning federal lands; action by certain cities and counties not precluded.

321.736 Hearings and recommendations of local planning agencies.





Transfer or referral of certain applications to State 321.737 Engineer.

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Hearing and recommendation of State Agency. Grant or denial of consent by Governor. Duties of Administrator and Land Use Planning 321.770 **Advisory Council.**





