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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Neal A. Patel](mailto:neal_patel@heller.senate.gov) | | April 29, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller’s Lake Tahoe Restoration Act Clears Hurdle**  ***Passes Senate committee as part of broader water resources bill***  **(Washington, DC) –** U.S. Senator Dean Heller issued the following statement after the *Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2015* (S. 1724) was recently included in S. 2848, the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (WRDA), unveiled earlier this week by the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee. Yesterday, S.2848 passed the EPW Committee by a vote of 19-1. Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe (R-OK) and Ranking Member Barbara Boxer (D-CA) hope to bring this legislation before the full Senate later this summer.  “Lake Tahoe is one of the state’s most valued treasures, and we must ensure it has a healthy future. I appreciate Senators Inhofe and Boxer working with us to include this important initiative in their water resources bill, and I’m proud it passed with strong bipartisan support. It shows how much of a priority conserving a national treasure like Lake Tahoe is for our nation,” said Senator Dean Heller.  “Lake Tahoe is one of the state’s most valued treasures, and we must ensure it has a healthy future. I’m proud this legislation passed through the EPW Committee as part of the WRDA legislation with strong bipartisan support. It shows how much of a priority protecting and preserving Lake Tahoe is for our nation,” said **Senator Dean Heller**.  **Background:**  Earlier this month, Senators Heller, Feinstein and Reid submitted this [letter](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/483560d8-360e-4b32-b76b-88684c08f679/04132016%20Heller-Reid-Feinstein%20LTRA-WRDA%20Letter.pdf) to the EPW Committee leadership, requesting that the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act be included in this year’s Water Resources Development Act. WRDA is a bill periodically approved by the Congress focused on supporting the nation’s waterway infrastructure, flood control, and environmental restoration needs. The last [WRDA bill (P.L.113-121)](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=67229953-ABFC-49B5-8B93-390EA2C5CD99) was enacted in the summer of 2014.  The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act invests $415 million in the Tahoe Basin over the next 10 years towards:   * **Wildfire Prevention** – Provides $150 million for fire risk reduction and forest management. These dollars go toward fuel reduction projects in high risk areas like South Shore, Carnelian Bay, Incline, and West shore stewardship contracts to restore forest health and wildlife habitat, and municipal water infrastructure to support improved flows for firefighting. * **The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP)** – Provides$80 million to jumpstart projects spanning from new bike trails to creek restoration and fire treatment. Some previous EIP projects that have benefited the region include the Heavenly Gondola and Village, the Angora Fire rehabilitation, Lake View Commons, the Sand Harbor Visitor Center, and the Incline Creek Restoration. * **The Invasive Species Management Program** – Provides $45 million to prevent the introduction of the quagga mussel and manage other harmful invasive species like the Asian clam. This includes lake-wide aquatic invasive species control and a watercraft inspection program. * **Stormwater Projects** – Sets aside $113 million to implement storm water management, erosion control, and watershed restoration projects. Storm water runoff from roads and the urban areas in the basin, vehicle exhaust, altered wetlands and streams, and inadequate storm water pollution control have significantly impacted Lake Tahoe’s famous clarity. * **The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery Program** – Allocates $20 million to recover the Lahontan cutthroat trout – a federally threatened species and Nevada’s state fish. * **Increases Accountability and Oversight** – Provides $5 million to ensure projects will have monitoring and assessment in order to determine the most cost-effective projects and ensure dollars are properly utilized. * **Overall Management Improvement** – Sets aside $2 million to cover the cost of land exchanges and sales on both the California and Nevada sides of the Tahoe Basin that will improve efficiencies of public land management.   The bipartisan legislation was crafted to protect the Lake Tahoe Region by improving water clarity, reducing wildfire threat, jumpstarting innovative transportation and infrastructure projects, and combating invasive species.  A PDF copy of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is attached with this release.  ###  [cid:image005.png@01D15EA3.CEBDCB00](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177)[cid:image006.png@01D15EA3.CEBDCB00](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller)[cid:image007.png@01D15EA3.CEBDCB00](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |