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**Heller Secures $12 Million to Preserve Lake Tahoe, Fight Wildfires in Measure Approved by Senate Panel**

*Heller’s Lake Tahoe Restoration Act to receive $12 million*

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) announced that he secured $12 million in federal funding for his [Lake Tahoe Restoration Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2016/9/heller-carries-lake-tahoe-restoration-act-across-senate-finish-line) as well as funding to help detect wildfires in a spending measure approved by the U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies today.

Earlier this month, [Heller urged the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS)](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=8CCECB8D-C0C2-4B18-A27F-3C38C7B56DB7) to ensure that the Lake Tahoe Basin had the proper tools to protect its communities from the imminent threat of wildfire, as well as to fully fund and support the AlertTahoe camera systems. Last month, Heller also [attended a roundtable discussion](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=9C11C7A7-ACE7-466E-B777-03D76215A3EF) with U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, USDA Secretary Perdue, and USFS Acting Chief Vicky Christensen as well to discuss wildfire prevention measures and specifically AlertTahoe in Nevada and across the West.

Specifically, the appropriations bill includes $6 million that will go toward wildfire management in Lake Tahoe, and $6 million to combat invasive species at the Lake.  Additionally, the bill includes $2 million that will go toward organizations that integrate technological advances to fight wildfire, such as AlertTahoe, a camera system that helps firefighters around the Lake Tahoe area.

“As a lifelong Nevadan and an avid outdoorsman, Lake Tahoe remains a source of memories for me and my family, including my four children and now three grandchildren,” **said Heller.** “Lake Tahoe’s exceptional beauty offers a unique experience to tourists and countless families like mine, and helps drive our local economy and create jobs. That is why I was proud to work with the Senate Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Interior and Environment to include funds for my Lake Tahoe Restoration Act that will help preserve the Tahoe Basin. I’m also encouraged to see that this bill directs $2 million to support innovative wildfire prevention efforts, such as AlertTahoe.”

In 2017, wildfires ravaged over 10 million acres across the country, including 1.2 million acres of land in Nevada alone. According to the USDA, more than 28,000 people were deployed to fight the deadly blazes and approximately 12,300 structures were lost. Heller, a member of the Senate Western Caucus, has championed and supported several pieces of legislation to combat fires in Nevada. Most recently, [Heller supported legislation signed into law to provide federal funding for wildfire management and improvements to firefighting](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/heller-secures-nv-priorities-in-spending-measure-bill-now-headed-to-the-president-s-desk) by modernizing aviation, radio, and evacuation system infrastructure and other platforms that detect and monitor fire, which includes projects like AlertTahoe. It also directs the Forest Service to partner with the University of Nevada on wildfire risk mapping.

Heller also has a history of introducing and supporting measures to protect Lake Tahoe. His [Lake Tahoe Restoration Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2016/9/heller-carries-lake-tahoe-restoration-act-across-senate-finish-line), a bipartisan bill he introduced with Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) to restore the Lake Tahoe Area, was signed into law in December of 2016. The legislation was the product of years of bipartisan collaboration to ensure Lake Tahoe remains a clean, safe, and vibrant outdoor destination for both Nevadans and tourists alike.

**Background on Lake Tahoe Restoration Act:**

The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act, signed into law in December of 2016, aims to invest $415 million over seven years to restore the Lake Tahoe Basin.

* 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.

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