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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Neal A. Patel](mailto:neal_patel@heller.senate.gov) | | December 9, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller Ensures Passage of Final Water Bill including Lake Tahoe Initiative**  *WIIN Act Headed to President for his Signature*  **(Washington, DC)** – United States Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) issued the following statement after the *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA),* [*titled the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act*](http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20161205/CPRT-114-HPRT-RU00-S612.pdf), passed the Senate earlier today. This legislation included the important *Lake Tahoe Restoration Act* ([S. 1724](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/6bb61667-92cc-43a8-b91f-7ea86fa1303f/Lake%20Tahoe%20Restoration%20Act%202015.pdf)), a bill crafted to improve water clarity, reduce wildfire threats, jumpstart transportation and infrastructure projects, and combat invasive species at Lake Tahoe.  **“After many years of climbing this mountain, we have arrived to the summit. Federal policy is once again focused on preserving Lake Tahoe for future generations of Americans to enjoy. Important initiatives addressing the numerous threats the Lake faces will now be set into motion. The importance of this legislation and what it means to the Tahoe Basin cannot be understated. This will be one of the greatest achievements our states have seen come out of Washington, and I’m happy to have been a part of it,”** said United States Senator Dean Heller.  **BACKGROUND:**  The final bicameral agreement known as [*the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act*](http://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20161205/CPRT-114-HPRT-RU00-S612.pdf), invests $415 million in the Tahoe Basin over the next 7 years toward:   * **Wildfire Prevention** – Provides $150 million for fire risk reduction and forest management. These dollars go toward fuel reduction projects in high-risk areas to restore forest health and wildlife habitat. A House provision focused on streamlining approvals for these types of activities was also included. * **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 federal government owns nearly 80 percent of the land in the Lake Tahoe Basin, creating a significant responsibility for its agencies to contribute to the ongoing management of its natural resources. The $415 million authorized under this bill ensures the federal government’s share of this responsibility is met.  More information on the final package can be found [here](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=48210585-61CC-4EF8-8942-12653FF7DAD5).  ###  [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_fb.png](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_tw.png](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller) [http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/vendor/_skins/heller/images/newsletter/icon_yt.png](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |