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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contacts:** [Neal A. Patel](mailto:neal_patel@heller.senate.gov)/[Michawn Rich](mailto:michawn_rich@heller.senate.gov) | | January 20, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller’s Lake Tahoe Restoration Act Passes Committee**  **(Washington, DC) –** Today, the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works (EPW) passed U.S. Senator Dean Heller’s (R-NV) *Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2015* ([S. 1724](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/6bb61667-92cc-43a8-b91f-7ea86fa1303f/Lake%20Tahoe%20Restoration%20Act%202015.pdf)). The bipartisan legislation, crafted alongside Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Harry Reid (D-NV), and Barbara Boxer (D-CA), provides federal, state, and local partners important tools to reduce wildfire threats, improve water clarity, jumpstart innovative infrastructure projects, and combat invasive species. Following Committee passage, Senator Heller issued this statement:  “As a lifelong Nevadan and an avid outdoorsman, I grew up enjoying Nevada’s beautiful outdoors, such as Lake Tahoe. Today’s committee passage is a big step towards combating the numerous threats that take a toll on the Tahoe Basin,” said **Senator Dean Heller**. “I look forward to working with our delegations in both the Senate and the House to resolve the discrepancies between the two different Tahoe proposals and enact a bill that helps conserve the Basin’s natural beauty for generations to come.”  **Background:**  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 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 the Senate bill ensures the federal government’s share of this responsibility is met.  ### |