

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 4692

To direct the Secretary of the Army, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the implementation of the Las Vegas Wash Wetland Restoration and Lake Mead Water Quality Improvement Project, Nevada.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 19, 2000

Ms. BERKLEY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Army, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the implementation of the Las Vegas Wash Wetland Restoration and Lake Mead Water Quality Improvement Project, Nevada.

1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2        *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3        **SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Las Vegas Wash Wet-

5        lands Restoration and Lake Mead Water Quality Improve-

6        ment Act of 2000”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

3 (1) the Las Vegas Wash is a significant eco-  
4 system of desert wetland created by treated effluent  
5 return flows, urban runoff, and flood events from  
6 the Las Vegas Valley;

7 (2) a healthy wetland ecosystem in the Las  
8 Vegas Wash would improve water quality in the Las  
9 Vegas Bay, the Lake Mead National Recreation  
10 Area, and the lower Colorado River, which is critical  
11 habitat for endangered and threatened fish and wild-  
12 life populations;

13 (3) the Secretary of the Interior delivers municie-  
14 ipal, industrial, and agricultural water from the Col-  
15 orado River to millions of people in Nevada, Arizona,  
16 and California;

17 (4) a significant concern relating to water qual-  
18 ity in Lake Mead is the transmission of contami-  
19 nants to the Colorado River through the Las Vegas  
20 Wash from shallow ground water seepage originating  
21 at an industrial complex located in the southeast  
22 part of the Las Vegas Valley, Nevada;

23 (5) such industrial complex was constructed by  
24 the Federal Government during World War II to  
25 manufacture products required by the Department  
26 of Defense, including perchlorate, which is an essen-

1 tial component of rocket fuel used exclusively by the  
2 Federal Government;

3 (6) over the past 20 years the Las Vegas Wash  
4 wetland has been significantly eroded and deterio-  
5 rated by flash floods, increasing treated effluent  
6 flows, urban runoff, and polluted shallow ground-  
7 water seepage;

8 (7) the loss of the Las Vegas Wash wetland is  
9 having an adverse impact on wildlife habitat;

10 (8) the Las Vegas Wash wetland is a unique  
11 opportunity to experience a wetland environment  
12 providing educational, cultural, environmental, and  
13 recreation benefits to the community of southern  
14 Nevada;

15 (9) as recommended by a citizens' water quality  
16 advisory committee in 1998, the Las Vegas Wash  
17 Coordination Committee, including Federal, State,  
18 and local agencies, was formed to establish a com-  
19 prehensive adaptive management plan for the Las  
20 Vegas Wash wetland;

21 (10) from 1998 to 1999, the Committee en-  
22 gaged in an extensive public process to evaluate the  
23 multifaceted challenges associated with the restora-  
24 tion of the Las Vegas Wash wetland;

1           (11) in October of 1999, the Committee initi-  
2           ated a process for public comment on a comprehen-  
3           sive adaptive management plan;

4           (12) in January 2000, the adaptive manage-  
5           ment plan was approved by the Board of the South-  
6           ern Nevada Water Authority, which is the coordi-  
7           nating agency for the Committee; and

8           (13) the adaptive management plan calls for a  
9           partnership among Federal, State and local agencies  
10          with an interest in Las Vegas Wash wetland.

11         (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are—

12           (1) to recognize the importance of the restora-  
13          tion of the Las Vegas Wash wetland to water quality  
14          in the Colorado River and a desert wetland eco-  
15          system;

16           (2) to direct the affected Federal agencies to  
17          participate constructively in the implementation of  
18          the Las Vegas Wash Wetland Restoration and Lake  
19          Mead Water Quality Improvement Project under the  
20          comprehensive adaptive management plan; and

21           (3) to authorize such sums as are necessary for  
22          the affected Federal agencies to carry out specific  
23          tasks required by the Project in partnership with the  
24          authority and other State and local agencies involved  
25          in the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act, the following definitions apply:

3 (1) **AUTHORITY.**—The term “Authority” means  
4 the Southern Nevada Water Authority, organized  
5 under the law of the State of Nevada.

6 (2) **COMMITTEE.**—The term “Committee”  
7 means the 28-member Las Vegas Wash Coordina-  
8 tion Committee, including representatives of—

9 (A) the Army Corps of Engineers;

10 (B) the Environmental Protection Agency;

11 (C) the United States Fish and Wildlife  
12 Service;

13 (D) the National Park Service;

14 (E) the Bureau of Reclamation;

15 (F) the Natural Resources Conservation  
16 Service;

17 (G) the Southern Nevada Water Authority;

18 (H) the Nevada Division of Environmental  
19 Protection, Clark County, Nevada (including  
20 the Clark County Department of Parks and  
21 Recreation);

22 (I) the Clark County Sanitation District;

23 (J) the cities of Las Vegas, North Las  
24 Vegas, and Henderson, Nevada;

25 (K) the Clark County Regional Flood Con-  
26 trol District;

1 (L) other Federal, State, and local agen-  
2 cies;

3 (M) environmental groups; and

4 (N) private citizens.

5 (3) PROJECT.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “Project”  
7 means the Las Vegas Wash Wetlands Restora-  
8 tion and Lake Mead Water Quality Improve-  
9 ment Project.

10 (B) INCLUSIONS.—Such term includes the  
11 programs, features, components, projects, and  
12 activities identified in the Comprehensive  
13 Adaptive Management Plan for the Las Vegas  
14 Wash developed by the Committee and dated  
15 January 20, 2000.

16 **SEC. 4. PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any other authority  
18 granted under Federal law, the Secretary of the Army,  
19 the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agen-  
20 cy, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of the  
21 Interior may participate in the continued development and  
22 implementation of the Project.

23 (b) FEDERAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary of the  
24 Army, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection  
25 Agency, and the Secretary of the Interior shall provide

1 with respect to the Project such technical assistance, inter-  
2 agency coordination, and funding for—

3 (1) the collection and modeling of hydrologic  
4 data for water quality; and

5 (2) the design and construction of—

6 (A) erosion control facilities;

7 (B) wetland restoration features;

8 (C) ground water interdiction facilities;

9 (D) treated effluent transport diffusion  
10 and reuse features;

11 (E) water quality improvement facilities;

12 and

13 (F) any other project features developed  
14 under the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive  
15 Adaptive Management Plan.

16 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
17 are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be  
18 necessary to carry out this Act.

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