

SLOAN CANYON CONSERVATION AND
LATERAL PIPELINE ACT

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WESTERMAN, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 972]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 972) to amend the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act to adjust the boundary of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 972 is to amend the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act to adjust the boundary of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

In recent decades, southern Nevada has experienced a rapid increase in population, which shows no signs of decelerating. A study from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, predicts that the region's population will rise to 3.4 million by 2060, up from the 2.3 million recorded in 2022.¹ Currently, 40 percent of the region's drinking water is delivered through a single pipeline, known as the

¹ Staying on Track: UNLV's Population Forecast Continues to Predict 1M More Residents in Southern Nevada, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, August 12, 2022, <https://www.unlv.edu/news/release/staying-track-unlvs-population-forecast-continues-predict-1m-more-residents-southern>.

South Valley Lateral, that was constructed in the 1990s.² In response to the recent influx of residents to the region, and a marked increase in water demand, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) engaged in years of study and coordinated with local stakeholders to ensure that reliable water sources are accessible to all residents and visitors in the Las Vegas Valley.

As a result of that study and coordination, SNWA is proposing to construct a new water pipeline to meet the demands of reliable drinking water for current and future residents. A new water pipeline would help maintain water deliveries if the South Valley Lateral suffered an outage or required repairs.³ The preferred southern route would be constructed in the region's less-developed areas, including a portion running underneath the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA).

Established by Congress in November 2002, the NCA is one of 19 national conservation areas managed for conservation and restoration and provides for multiple uses, including mining, oil and gas leasing, and grazing.⁴ The Sloan Canyon NCA encompasses 48,438 acres surrounding the Cities of Las Vegas and Henderson, Nevada.⁵ The preferred route through the NCA, when compared to a northern alternative route, saves taxpayers an estimated \$200 million and minimize disturbances to residents.⁶ The proposed water pipeline would be underground, causing minimal surface disturbance through the proposed route.

H.R. 972, the "Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act," contains two major provisions. First, the bill grants authority to the SNWA for the construction of a water pipeline project under the Sloan Canyon NCA. Second, the bill increases the size of the Sloan Canyon NCA area by more than 9,000 acres to 57,728 total acres. The bill allows for the use of gravel, sand, and minerals obtained from tunneling for parking lots and other infrastructure in the NCA. As the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) currently administers the additional acres, the legislation would not add to the federal estate.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 972 was introduced on February 4, 2025, by Representative Dina Titus (D–NV). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. On April 9, 2025, the Committee on Natural Resources met to consider the bill. The bill was then ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

² Southern Nevada Water Authority, "Horizon Lateral", <https://www.snwa.com/infrastructure-improvements/horizon-lateral/index.html>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, "Monuments, Conservation Areas and Similar Designations", <https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/monuments-ncas>.

⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, "Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area", <https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/nevada/sloan-canyon-nca>.

⁶ Statement of U.S. Rep. Dina Titus (D–NV); <https://www.congress.gov/118/chr/CHRG-118hrg55272/CHRG-118hrg55272.pdf>.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing in the 118th Congress by the Subcommittee on Federal Lands held on March 20, 2024.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 names the bill the “Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act.”

Section 2. Definitions

Section 2 defines key terms in the legislation.

Section 3. Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area boundary adjustment

Section 3 of the legislation adjusts the boundary of the Sloan Canyon NCA by an additional 9,290 acres. Further, Section 3 requires the BLM to grant SNWA access to rights-of-way in the Sloan Canyon NCA for operating permanent water pipeline infrastructure. Section 3 also authorizes the SNWA to use or dispose of sand, gravel, minerals, or other materials obtained from tunneling of the water pipeline. This section requires the Secretary of the Interior and SNWA to enter into a memorandum of understanding within 30 days of the approval of the use or disposal of certain materials within the right-of-way. Finally, this section clarifies that the expansion of the NCA boundary is subject to valid existing rights-of-way and operations, as well as future rights-of-way within existing corridors for both transmission and other utilities.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources’ oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) and (3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and sections 308(a) and 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

H.R. 972, Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on April 9, 2025			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2025	2025-2030	2025-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	*	*
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	0	0
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	Yes
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between -\$500,000 and zero.			

H.R. 972 would expand the Sloan Canyon National Conservation area in Nevada by about 9,000 acres, subject to valid existing rights. The bill also would direct the Department of the Interior (DOI) to grant the Southern Nevada Water Authority rights-of-way for the construction and operation of a water pipeline and related facilities within and outside the conservation area. The rights-of-way would be provided at no cost to the water authority, subject to environmental laws, and would include the right to excavate and dispose of sand, gravel, and other materials resulting from building the water infrastructure project.

The public land that would be added to the conservation area and used for the rights-of-way is currently withdrawn from mineral leasing, and any recreational activities that currently take place would not be affected; thus, under the bill the federal government would not forgo any receipts from those activities.

Using information from DOI, CBO estimates that the department would collect about \$90,000 in fees from the water authority for a required analysis of potential effects on endangered species in the area. Those fees are recorded in the federal budget as offsetting receipts (that is, as reductions in direct spending) and would be available to spend without further appropriation for land management activities within the conservation area. On that basis, CBO estimates that enacting the bill would have a negligible effect on net direct spending over the 2025–2035 period.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Lilia Ledezma. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to amend the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area Act to adjust the boundary of the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, and for other purposes.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

According to the Congressional Budget Office, H.R. 972 contains no unfunded mandates as defined by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Directed Rule Making. This bill does not contain any directed rule makings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95–220, as amended by Public Law 98–169) as relating to other programs.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SLOAN CANYON NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA ACT

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**TITLE VI—SLOAN CANYON NATIONAL
CONSERVATION AREA**

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SEC. 603. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) **CONSERVATION AREA.**—The term “Conservation Area” means the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area established by section 604(a).

(2) **FEDERAL PARCEL.**—The term “Federal parcel” means the parcel of Federal land consisting of approximately 500 acres that is identified as Tract A on the map entitled “Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act” and dated October 1, 2002.

(3) **MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—The term “management plan” means the management plan for the Conservation Area developed under section 605(b).

(4) **MAP.**—The term “map” means the [map entitled “Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act” and dated October 1, 2002] *map entitled “Proposed Sloan Canyon Expansion” and dated May 20, 2024.*

SEC. 604. ESTABLISHMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—For the purpose described in section 602, there is established in the State a conservation area to be known as the Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area.

(b) **AREA INCLUDED.**—The Conservation Area shall consist of approximately [48,438] 57,728 acres of public land in the County, as generally depicted on the map.

(c) **MAP AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a map and legal description of the Conservation Area.

(2) **EFFECT.**—The map and legal description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this section, except that the Secretary may correct minor errors in the map or legal description.

(3) **PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.**—A copy of the map and legal description shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate office of the Bureau of Land Management.

SEC. 605. MANAGEMENT.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, shall manage the Conservation Area—

(1) in a manner that conserves, protects, and enhances the resources of the Conservation Area; and

(2) in accordance with—

(A) the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.); and

(B) other applicable law, including this Act.

(b) **MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the State, the city of Henderson, the County, and any other interested persons, shall develop a management plan for the Conservation Area.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The management plan shall—

(A) describe the appropriate uses and management of the Conservation Area;

(B)(i) authorize the use of motorized vehicles in the Conservation Area—

(I) for installing, repairing, maintaining, and reconstructing water development projects, including guzzlers, that would enhance the Conservation Area by promoting healthy, viable, and more naturally distributed wildlife populations; and

(II) subject to any limitations that are not more restrictive than the limitations on such uses authorized in wilderness areas under section 208; and

(ii) include or provide recommendations on ways of minimizing the visual impacts of such activities on the Conservation Area;

(C) include a plan for litter cleanup and public lands awareness campaign on public lands in and around the Conservation Area; and

(D) include a recommendation on the location for a right-of-way for a rural roadway to provide the city of Henderson with access to the Conservation Area, in accordance with the application numbered N-65874.

(c) USES.—The Secretary shall allow only such uses of the Conservation Area that the Secretary determines will further the purpose described in section 602.

(d) MOTORIZED VEHICLES.—Except as needed for administrative purposes or to respond to an emergency, the use of motorized vehicles in the Conservation Area shall be permitted only on roads and trails designated for the use of motorized vehicles by the management plan developed under subsection (b).

(e) WITHDRAWAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to valid existing rights, all public land in the Conservation Area is withdrawn from—

(A) all forms of entry and appropriation under the public land laws;

(B) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(C) operation of the mineral leasing, mineral materials, and geothermal leasing laws.

(2) ADDITIONAL LAND.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the Secretary acquires mineral or other interests in a parcel of land within the Conservation Area after the date of enactment of this Act, the parcel is withdrawn from operation of the laws referred to in paragraph (1) on the date of acquisition of the land.

(f) HUNTING, FISHING, AND TRAPPING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this title affects the jurisdiction of the State with respect to fish and wildlife, including hunting, fishing, and trapping in the Conservation Area.

(2) LIMITATIONS.—

(A) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary may designate by regulation areas in which, and establish periods during which, for reasons of public safety, administration, or compliance with applicable laws, no hunting, fishing, or trapping will be permitted in the Conservation Area.

(B) CONSULTATION.—Except in emergencies, the Secretary shall consult with the appropriate State agency be-

fore promulgating regulations under subparagraph (A) that close a portion of the Conservation Area to hunting, fishing, or trapping.

(g) NO BUFFER ZONES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The establishment of the Conservation Area shall not create an express or implied protective perimeter or buffer zone around the Conservation Area.

(2) PRIVATE LAND.—If the use of, or conduct of an activity on, private land that shares a boundary with the Conservation Area is consistent with applicable law, nothing in this title concerning the establishment of the Conservation Area shall prohibit or limit the use or conduct of the activity.

(h) HORIZON LATERAL PIPELINE RIGHT-OF-WAY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sections 202 and 503 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712, 1763) and subject to valid existing rights and paragraph (3), the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management (referred to in this subsection as the “Secretary”), shall, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this subsection, grant to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (referred to in this subsection as the “Authority”), not subject to the payment of rents or other charges, the temporary and permanent water pipeline infrastructure, and outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area, powerline, facility, and access road rights-of-way depicted on the map for the purposes of—

(A) performing geotechnical investigations within the rights-of-way; and

(B) constructing and operating water transmission and related facilities.

(2) EXCAVATION AND DISPOSAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Authority may, without consideration, excavate and use or dispose of sand, gravel, minerals, or other materials from the tunneling of the water pipeline necessary to fulfill the purpose of the rights-of-way granted under paragraph (1).

(B) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the rights-of-way are granted under paragraph (1), the Secretary and the Authority shall enter into a memorandum of understanding identifying Federal land on which the Authority may dispose of materials under subparagraph (A) to further the interests of the Bureau of Land Management.

(3) REQUIREMENTS.—A right-of-way issued under this subsection shall be subject to the following requirements:

(A) The Secretary may include reasonable terms and conditions, consistent with section 505 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1765), as are necessary to protect Conservation Area resources.

(B) Construction of the water pipeline shall not permanently adversely affect conservation area surface resources.

(C) The right-of-way shall not be located through or under any area designated as wilderness.

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