

**STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE DINA TITUS**

H.R. 6209, SLOAN CANYON CONSERVATION AND LATERAL PIPELINE ACT

**HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES FEDERAL LANDS SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON
LEGISLATION
MARCH 20, 2024**

Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on H.R. 6209, the *Sloan Canyon Conservation and Lateral Pipeline Act*. My bill would allow a portion of the Southern Nevada Water Authority's (SNWA) Horizon Lateral water pipeline project to tunnel underneath Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA), while expanding the NCA by 9,290 acres. This project will increase water reliability for over a million Southern Nevadans, fortify the region's water infrastructure against potential outages, and minimize disruptions and impacts to communities in my District, all while enhancing the preservation of the surrounding desert landscapes and unique habitat.

Currently, 40 percent of Southern Nevada's drinking water is provided by the South Valley Lateral (SVL), a 27-mile pipeline which has been in service since the 1990s. Unfortunately, the line does not have the redundancy needed to ensure continued water services during a disruption or system emergency. This vulnerability became apparent in 2017 when the SVL underwent emergency repairs and was subsequently shut down, forcing local agencies to temporarily adjust water delivery operations.

In recent years, public planning engagements have resulted in two options for an additional pipeline:

The first, also known as the “Northern Alignment”, would involve years of construction through neighborhoods in Henderson, Nevada, causing significant traffic congestion and disrupting multiple neighborhoods and businesses.

The second option, known as the “South Alignment”, would be constructed on undeveloped land, including a nearly seven mile stretch beneath the Sloan Canyon NCA. Not only would this preferred option minimize disruptions in surrounding communities, but it would also be better positioned to meet a targeted completion date of 2030 and would save ratepayers at least \$200 million compared to the Northern Alignment.

In order for this project to move forward in a permanently protected area, Congressional authorization is required. This is why I introduced H.R. 6209, the House companion to Senator Cortez Masto’s legislation which the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources passed unanimously last year. In addition to granting a right-of-way to the Southern Nevada Water Authority for constructing the pipeline, the bill ensures additional habitat protections by expanding the current NCA by 9,290 acres to ensure connectivity for bighorn sheep between protected areas – including the recently designated Avi Kwa Ame National Monument. The language also includes assurances that the right-of-way will minimize ecosystem disruptions by ensuring the Horizon Lateral cannot have a permanent adverse effect on resources, and that the pipeline cannot go underneath the wilderness area within Sloan Canyon.

I am proud to say this legislation has secured wide support from Clark County and the City of Henderson, as well as local conservation organizations, labor unions, and business associations. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues on this committee to support this legislation.

Thank you.