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ACR-22 Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week. (2015-2016)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 22

CHAPTER 167

Relative to Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 10, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 22, Dahle. Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week.

This measure would declare the week of September 13, 2015, through September 19, 2015, and the third week of September every year thereafter, as provided, as Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week. The measure would applaud public schools that include watershed protection in the Sierra Nevada Region as part of their outdoor education curriculum whenever possible during the month of September. The measure would also commend state, federal, and local agencies, along with nongovernmental organizations for working cooperatively to achieve the goal of increasing the pace and scale of watershed and forest restoration in the region with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy playing a key role in the development of a plan and program to address these issues.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, The Sierra Nevada Conservancy was established in bipartisan fashion to initiate, encourage, and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada, its communities, and the citizens of California; and

WHEREAS, The Sierra Nevada Region encompasses 25 million acres and is the origin of more than 60 percent of California's developed water supply; and

WHEREAS, Forests of the Sierra Nevada Region store massive amounts of carbon and present an immediate opportunity to assist the state in meeting the objectives of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006; and

WHEREAS, The region is the primary source of fresh water flowing into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; and

WHEREAS, The Sierra Nevada Region draws visitors from around the United States and the world, with Yosemite National Park alone bringing in nearly four million visitors per year; and

WHEREAS, Many of the forests in the Sierra Nevada Region are overgrown and unhealthy, putting them at extreme risk of uncharacteristically large and damaging fires, with this year likely to establish the highest number of acres burned in a single decade in the recorded history of the Sierra Nevada; and

WHEREAS, The impacts of these fires include massive emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants, as well as a dramatic increase in sedimentation of streams and reservoirs and the loss of crucial habitat and recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Agriculture and tourism in the Sierra Nevada Region are key economic drivers in the state, and the values and services coming out of the region, such as clean water and energy, are critical to the state's overall economic health; and

WHEREAS, The legacy of Gold Rush era mining has resulted in impairments to water quality from more than 20,000 abandoned mines, of which more than 3,000 are known to contain chemical hazards, that are the primary source of mercury for the San Francisco Bay and the Delta; and

WHEREAS, The Great Sierra River Cleanup is the premier volunteer event focused on removing trash and restoring the health of waterways throughout the Sierra Nevada Region and is held in conjunction with California Coastal Cleanup Day; and

WHEREAS, During the first six years of the Great Sierra River Cleanup, more than 23,000 volunteers have joined together to remove more than 600 tons of trash and recyclables from watersheds throughout the Sierra Nevada Region; now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature acknowledges the critical role the Sierra Nevada Region plays in California's economy and environment and the wide range of benefits, products, amenities, and resources originating in the Sierra Nevada, and acknowledges the benefits of proactive restoration of the watersheds and forests of the region; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature commends the state, federal, and local agencies, along with nongovernmental organizations, for working cooperatively to achieve the goal of increasing the pace and scale of watershed and forest restoration in the region with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy playing a key role in the development of a plan to address these issues; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature applauds the public schools that include watershed protection in the Sierra Nevada Region as part of their outdoor education curriculum whenever possible during the month of September; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature calls upon all Californians to acknowledge the multiple benefits flowing from the Sierra Nevada Region through observance of Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature declares the week of September 13, 2015, through September 19, 2015, and the third week of September, beginning on the third Sunday of the month, every year thereafter, as Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week, with the purpose of expanding the acknowledgment of the region's contributions to a higher quality of life for all Californians; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.