

Senate panel drops water sustainability from flood bill

may 28th

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A high-stakes poker game over the future of the Truckee River flood control project is being played out in the Nevada Legislature with bills about the project and water sustainability issues in Washoe County.

The state Senate Government Affairs Committee voted Wednesday to remove water sustainability from Senate Bill 175, which would enable Washoe officials to create a joint powers board with the ability to charge fees for flood control without a public vote. Last week, Assemblywoman Sheila Leslie, D-Reno, got the Assembly 27 Democrats in favor, and 13 Republicans opposed, to approve the Senate bill after attaching language requiring

SENATE BILL 175

SPONSOR: Senate Government Affairs Committee

PURPOSE: Create a new flood management authority for Washoe County

STATUS: Assembly amendment rejected by the Senate Government Affairs Committee

regional planning officials to base future development on a sustainable water supply. That would put into state law an initiative approved by 73 percent of Washoe County voters last fall.

The Senate bill returns to the Assembly for agreement on dropping Leslie's amendment. If the Senate concurs, the bill goes to Gov. Jim Gibbons.

If not, the bill goes to a conference committee to work



Dave Aiazzi



Jim Gibbons



Sheila Leslie



Jessica Sterrazza

out a compromise before the session ends Monday.

Gibbons vetoed her bill, Assembly Bill 119, that enabled the water initiative last weekend, saying it was meddling in local affairs.

Reno Councilwoman Jessica Sterrazza, the flood control committee chairwoman, said she fears the loss of the Senate bill could put \$1 billion in federal funding in jeopardy and voted with the rest of the council Wednesday to oppose intertwining local issues and another bill calling for ward-only elections

for council members. She is in her sixth and final term due to the term limit law.

Leslie denied that.

"I am not ever running for city council anywhere," she said.

She said she has a long record as a state official who has worked on criminal justice, health and human services and environmental concerns.

Leslie said she did not seek an override for AB 119 because Senate Republicans would block it.

"My question to local officials and to the governor is what is so frightening about requiring land use and population, planning to be tied to identified and sustainable water resources?" she said. "If the bill really isn't needed, which seems to be their argument, why the full-court press to defeat it?"