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### **Advocates Celebrate Protection of Nevada Water Law as Nevada Legislature Adjourns**

Carson City, Nevada – The Nevada Legislature adjourned last night without enacting a controversial measure to redefine key provisions of the state’s water law.

Assembly Bill 298 was a proposal by the Southern Nevada Water Authority to lay out the definitions of certain terms and a detailed monitoring, management and mitigation (or 3M) process in statute. Despite attempts to work on the language, the bill died in the face of extensive opposition from environmentalists, sportsmen, ranchers, farmers, rural residents and governments, tribes, and businesses. This broad group of stakeholders feared the language was too permissive and would lead to more of the state’s groundwater basins becoming over-allocated.

“The fundamentals of Nevada’s water law are strong,” said Howard Watts III, Communications Specialist with the Great Basin Water Network, one of the groups in opposition to the proposed changes. “There are already strong definitions for these terms and processes as a result of regulations, agency orders, and case law. The best immediate step we can take to preserve the state’s water resources is to follow that law.”

After AB 298 failed to garner enough support and died on May 19<sup>th</sup>, legislators considered amending some of its concepts into another water bill, SB 47. That effort was dropped in the final week of the Legislature. Great Basin Water Network and others applaud that decision.

“It’s important that we get the policy right rather than enact something flawed just to meet a deadline,” said Watts. “Great Basin Water Network is committed to working with legislators and stakeholders over the interim in a deliberate, open process to identify areas where water law can be clarified or strengthened.”

Several water bills did pass the Legislature, cleaning up language and making minor improvements aimed at increasing conservation. Among the highlights were Assembly Bill 138 by Maggie Carlton, which officially legalizes the collection of rainwater, and Assembly Bill 209 by James Oscarson, creating opportunities for water rights holders to conserve in times of scarcity without being penalized. Several recommendations from the Governor’s Drought Forum and Legislative Commission’s Subcommittee to Study Water were ultimately enacted into law.

**About Great Basin Water Network:** GBWN is a diverse group of environmentalists, agriculturalists, local governments, Native American tribes, businesses, and urban and rural residents working to protect the water resources of the Great Basin for current and future residents – human, animal and plant.

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