



INNOVATION ZONES: NEXT STEPS FOR NEVADA Proposal for a Special Joint Committee

The Governor has proposed legislation for consideration in the 2021 Legislative Session to authorize the establishment of “Innovation Zones,” a unique form of local government on private land, for the purpose of creating favorable conditions for the advancement of innovative technologies and accelerating the State’s growing economic diversification and ability to attract advanced technology industries prepared to invest in the State’s success.

As the State of Nevada and the Nevada Legislature necessarily continue to direct their energies to the impact of and critical response to COVID-19 and the global pandemic, as well as budgetary and other issues raised during the 2021 Session, fully analyzing the potential benefits and impacts of legislation authorizing Innovation Zones remains challenging during the current legislative session. Therefore, an alternative is proposed to allow continued analysis and exploration of Innovation Zone issues through the appointment of a *special joint committee*.

With the goal of including legislators, the Governor proposes the formation of a *special joint committee* through a **Concurrent Resolution by the Nevada Legislature**. The Concurrent Resolution will allow for the appointment of a *special joint committee* by Legislative Leadership. Three or more members of each house representing majority and minority parties are recommended for effective and efficient study of Innovation Zones.

An example is [SCR 9ⁱ](#) from the 59th (1977) Legislative Session with a unique purpose related to public lands which authorized the committee to start and meet during the legislative session for the purpose of selecting its chair.

Outline of Creation and Responsibilities of the Special Joint Committee on Innovation Zones

- Created by the Legislature with staff and a budget.
- Direct the Committee to hold a series of public meetings (no less than once a month) to study the Innovation Zone proposal in more detail and submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislative Commission and the Governor by December 31, 2021, to the extent practicable.
- Recommendations may include but are not limited to:
 - (1) no further action,
 - (2) a Bill Draft Request (BDR) that may be pre-filed for the 2023 session, or
 - (3) legislative action prior to the 2023 regular session

Responsibilities of the Committee: The Committee would be tasked with reviewing the critical issues surrounding Innovation Zones and related economic development issues under review by the 2021 Legislature, *including but not limited to:*

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| • Regional water solutions | • Work force development |
| • Environmental compact | • Economic benefits |
| • Community benefits | • Revenue and tax distribution |
| • Affordable housing | • Governance |
| • Empowerment centers | • Impacts on surrounding counties |

Additional Considerations

With this timeline, proponents of the legislation will have additional time to finalize master planning documents/presentation, financial models, and related information that is important for consideration by the Committee and the Legislature. Meetings with critical stakeholders can also continue, including with local government and tribal leaders, water authorities, environmental groups, labor organizations, economic development authorities, interested tenants, and global interests.

ⁱ <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/InterimReports/1979/Bulletin79-19.pdf>