

# Defense Bill Includes Massive Military Land Grab in Nevada

## Navy to Seize Control of Hundreds of Thousands of Acres of Public Land

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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*The final version of the National Defense Authorization Act released Tuesday night by the House Rules Committee contains provisions that would enable an enormous [military land grab](#) in Nevada.*

Despite celebrations by the environmental justice community about the omission of **Sen. Joe Manchin's** permitting reform deal from the bill, the must-pass legislation does include a long-sought-after expansion of Naval Air Station Fallon in central Nevada. This provision would allow the Navy to gain complete or partial control of more than 500,000 acres of public land for bombing ranges and military exercise areas.

The public lands of central Nevada that would be turned into a military training area feature towering snow-capped mountain ranges and broad, sagebrush-filled basins. They're rich in wildlife, including desert bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, golden eagles and greater sage-grouse.

"This is a dark day for the public lands and wildlife of central Nevada," said Patrick Donnelly, Great Basin director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "I'm outraged that Nevada's senators are helping the military seize control of hundreds of thousands of acres of irreplaceable public land."

The expansion would entail a significant increase in military airplane activity above Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, an essential stopover on the Pacific flyway and a Western Hemispheric shorebird reserve. The refuge is dense with bald eagles, tundra swans and shorebirds such as American avocets and long-billed dowitchers. The increased overflights will disturb the birds as they stop to rest on their long migrations.

The bill also includes a backdoor authorization for the Dixie Valley water grab, a proposed project that would suck water out of remote Dixie Valley and pipe it 50 miles to Fallon to fuel unsustainable growth. This project was recently cited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a factor contributing to the endangered species listing of the Dixie Valley toad.

“Sen. Cortez Masto and Sen. Rosen have sold out Nevada’s public lands and wildlife,” said Donnelly. “They talk the talk about conservation, but when push comes to shove, they’re apparently willing to sacrifice our shared national heritage on the altar of the ever-expanding military-industrial complex.”

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*Featured image: Wetlands at Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge at sunset. Photo by Patrick Donnelly/Center for Biological Diversity.*

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