

Rep. Shelley Berkley
Testimony Before the House Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries and Oceans
H.R. 4345, The Ed Fountain Park Expansion Act
September 14, 2006

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and Ranking Member Pallone for scheduling today's hearing on my bill, the Ed Fountain Park Expansion Act. I am also pleased to welcome Councilman Lawrence Weekly from the City of Las Vegas, whose ward includes Ed Fountain Park.

This bill is very simple – it would transfer almost eight acres of land from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to the City of Las Vegas. This parcel is adjacent to the existing Ed Fountain Park, and previously housed the Fish and Wildlife Service headquarters of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge at a time when this location was on the outskirts of town. The agency has since moved to another location, and due to the phenomenal growth we have experienced in Southern Nevada, this vacant property is now very much in the middle of the city, as you can see in the aerial photograph that Councilman Weekly has provided with his written testimony. Unfortunately, in its current state, it cannot be used by the surrounding community.

Transferring the property to the City of Las Vegas will allow the City to expand Ed Fountain Park, which already provides a place for recreation for the surrounding community with lighted soccer fields, outdoor basketball courts, artificial-turf football fields, a bicycle track, and picnic areas. The City plans to construct a new community recreation center on the site, serving youth, adults and senior citizens alike.

As you know, the Senate has already approved its own version of this legislation, sponsored by Senators Reid and Ensign. I am hopeful that this committee will act quickly and forward the Ed Fountain Park Expansion Act to the full House so we can enact the bill this year.

It is an indication of how important this bill is to the community that Councilman Weekly has traveled from Las Vegas to attend this hearing. I am pleased to welcome him to Washington today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.