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LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Negative effects of urban sprawl

By Linda Stout, Las Vegas

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Concerned conservationists are raising red flags about the Clark County Lands Bill. If adopted, our suburban sprawl would grow by 42,000 acres, stretching miles along I-15 from Las Vegas to Primm. Framed as “sustainable expansion,” the bill claims that new industry and affordable housing would comply with Nevada’s emerging climate goals.

Research tells a different story. Expansion leads to urban sprawl, which causes higher car dependency, longer commutes and greater greenhouse gas emissions. Housing disparities increase rather than decrease. Affordable living options dwindle. Solutions to housing and climate challenges require smart, land-efficient policies. With 27,000 acres of undeveloped land within our urban boundaries, plenty of land remains for in-fill construction.

Sprawl also means tapping into our limited water resources from natural aquifers and the Colorado River. As we become warmer and drier, studies predict substantial reductions in river rations for Nevada, California and Arizona. Expansion for new industry and housing “perpetuates a pattern of development that has brought our society to the brink of ecological and climate collapse,” according to Patrick Donnelly, state director for the Center of Biological Diversity.

The Clark County Lands Bill underestimates the social and environmental impacts of urban sprawl. It jeopardizes Nevada’s efforts to cut carbon emissions and preserve our water resources. Ask your senators and members of Congress to listen to the research, prioritize climate policy, and protect public lands by opposing a bill declaring dubious “sustainable expansion.”