

SUMMARY: An ordinance amending Washoe County Code Chapter 50 (Public Peace, Safety and Morals) by revising provisions relating to the discharge of firearms.

BILL NO. _____

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING WASHOE COUNTY CODE CHAPTER 50 (PUBLIC PEACE, SAFETY AND MORALS) BY REMOVING PROVISIONS CONTAINING THE METES AND BOUNDS DESCRIPTIONS FOR CONGESTED AREAS RELATING TO THE DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS; BY REVISING PROVISIONS TO REQUIRE THE CONGESTED AREA BOUNDARIES TO BE ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS THROUGH RESOLUTION AND DEPICTED ON CONGESTED AREA MAPS; AND BY REVISING PROVISIONS TO REQUIRE THE CONGESTED AREA MAPS TO BE KEPT ON FILE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION AT THE WASHOE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE AND THE WASHOE COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER, AND FOR DIGITAL VERSIONS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS MAPPING; AND ALL MATTERS NECESSARILY CONNECTED THEREWITH AND PERTAINING THERETO.

WHEREAS:

- A. Nevada Revised Statutes ("NRS") 244.364(3) authorizes the Washoe County Commission, through enactment of an ordinance, to regulate the unsafe discharge of firearms. In 1965, Washoe County enacted such an ordinance which has since been amended and codified. These provisions prohibit the discharge of firearms in congested areas and areas within a certain proximity to dwellings.
- B. The Washoe County Commission finds that:
 - a. Residential areas within unincorporated Washoe County, and areas annexed by the Cities of Reno and Sparks, have grown substantially since the previous congested area boundaries for the discharge of firearms were established; and
 - b. The Washoe County Master Plan (currently, Envision Washoe 2040) recognizes established Planning Areas located within unincorporated Washoe County, which provide a logical, geographic framework for organizing congested area boundaries for the discharge of firearms; and

- c. The existing metes and bounds legal descriptions which define the congested area boundaries are difficult for the public and law enforcement to interpret, making public understanding and enforcement of the boundaries unnecessarily difficult; and
 - d. Replacing the metes and bounds descriptions with officially adopted maps, organized around Washoe County's Planning Areas as recognized in the Washoe County Master Plan and the Tahoe Area Plan, will improve clarity, public understanding, and enforcement of congested area boundaries.
- C. Accordingly, the Washoe County Commission desires to modernize the method by which congested area boundaries are determined, by replacing the existing metes and bounds legal descriptions in the Washoe County Code with officially adopted maps, depicting the congested area boundaries and other relevant information.
- D. Following a first reading and publication as required by NRS 244.100(1), and after a duly noticed public hearing, this Commission desires to adopt this Ordinance amending Chapter 50 of the Washoe County Code.

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF WASHOE DO
ORDAIN:

Section 1. Sections 50.096 to 50.108, inclusive, and sections 50.116 to 50.120, inclusive, of the Washoe County Code relating to congested areas and containing the metes and bounds descriptions for such areas are hereby repealed in their entirety.

Section 2. Chapter 50 of the Washoe County Code is hereby amended by adding thereto a new section which shall be labeled 50.153 and read as follows:

50.153 Amendment of congested areas and congested area maps.

Any congested area within a Washoe County Planning Area may be amended by the board of county commissioners; and such amendments shall be reflected on the applicable congested area map. Amendments to the congested areas and the corresponding maps shall be adopted by the board by resolution, which may be further amended by the board from time to time.

Section 3. Section 50.090 of the Washoe County Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

50.090 Definitions.

As used in sections 50.090 to 50.158, inclusive:

1. "Congested area" **or "congested shooting area"** means that portion of the county so determined pursuant to sections ~~50.094 to 50.154, inclusive~~ **or 50.193, as applicable**, where uncontrolled discharge of firearms would result in the greatest risk of injury to life and limb.

2. **"Congested area map" means an officially adopted map that graphically depicts the boundaries of a congested area within a specific Washoe County Planning Area.**

3. Firearm" means any weapon the discharge of which in the ordinary manner contemplated by its design and construction will or is likely to cause death or great bodily harm.

~~34.~~ "Peace officer" means any person who lawfully carries a gun, pistol or other firearm in the course of ~~his~~ **their** official duties.

5. **"Planning Area" means one of the geographic Planning Areas recognized in the Washoe County Master Plan and/or the Tahoe Area Plan.**

~~46.~~ "Warm Springs Defined Area" means the geographical area depicted on the ~~exhibit attached to this ordinance~~ **applicable congested area map** and which area is entirely within the Warm Springs Planning Area of the Washoe County Master Plan, ~~and which is entirely~~ south of the boundary between Townships 23 and 24, Range 20. The Warm Springs Defined Area does not include the areas designated on the Washoe County Master Plan as C, SR or RR within: Sections 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 21 and 22 of Township 22, Range 21; and Sections 31, 32 and 33 of Township 23, Range 21.

SECTION 4. Section 50.092 of the Washoe County Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

50.092 Unlawful discharge of firearms; exemptions.

1. It is unlawful for any person to:

(a) Discharge any gun, pistol, rifle, shotgun or other firearm in, on or across any county road or highway.

(b) Discharge in the unincorporated area of the county, except the Warm Springs Defined Area, any gun, pistol, rifle or other firearm, with the exception of

shotguns, air rifles or B-B guns, within 5,000 feet of any dwelling occupied by another person or persons.

(c) Discharge in the unincorporated area of the county, except the Warm Springs Defined Area, any shotgun, air rifle or B-B gun within 1,000 feet of any dwelling occupied by another person or persons.

(d) Discharge any gun, pistol, rifle, shotgun or other firearm within any congested area of the county.

(1) Unless in the possession of and while lawfully hunting under authority of a valid big game tag issued by the Nevada Department of Wildlife, and then only further than 5,000 feet from any dwelling occupied by another person or persons.

(e) Hunt by the use of any means up to and including archery equipment within 1,000 feet of any dwelling occupied by another person or persons.

(f) Discharge any firearm on a parcel in the Warm Springs Defined Area within 500 feet of a dwelling located on another parcel.

2. This section does not apply to:

(a) Peace officers in the lawful discharge of duty;

(b) ~~To persons~~ Persons shooting in any regularly established and lawfully authorized and licensed rifle range, gun club or shooting gallery;

(c) ~~To any~~ Any person lawfully discharging a firearm in protection of life or property.

SECTION 5. Section 50.094 of the Washoe County Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

50.094 Determination of congested areas.

1. For the purpose of enforcing the regulations set forth in section 50.092, ~~the board of county commissioners is authorized to establish congested areas described in section 50.096 et seq. within Washoe County Planning Areas in the unincorporated area of the Washoe County are hereby determined to be congested areas within the terms of sections 50.090 to 50.158, inclusive. The boundaries of each congested area listed in this section are as depicted on the applicable congested area map, as those maps may be amended from time to time by the board of county commissioners.~~

2. The congested areas designated by the board of county commissioners are listed as follows:

- (a) Cold Springs
- (b) Forest
- (c) High Desert
- (d) North Valleys
- (e) Northeast
- (f) Northwest
- (g) South Valleys
- (h) Southeast Truckee Meadows
- (i) Southwest Truckee Meadows
- (j) Spanish Springs
- (k) Sun Valley
- (l) Tahoe
- (m) Truckee Canyon
- (n) Verdi
- (o) Warm Springs

3. Each congested area map approved by the board of county commissioners shall be maintained on file with the Washoe County Clerk and the Washoe County Office of the County Manager and are available for public inspection during regular business hours. Further, digital versions of the congested area maps shall be available to the public through geographic information systems mapping, as provided in the Washoe Regional Mapping System.

SECTION 6. Section 50.152 of the Washoe County Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

50.152 Congested area: Effect of annexation by city.

Any part or parts of congested areas described in section 50.094 ~~et seq.~~ which subsequently become a part of an incorporated city by annexation shall cease to exist as congested areas.

SECTION 7. Section 50.154 of the Washoe County Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

50.154 Posting of congested areas.

1. **Physical B**boundaries of congested areas described in section 50.094 ~~et seq.~~ shall be posted by signs in a manner and at such places as are reasonably calculated to give notice of firearm restrictions contained in sections ~~50.0902 to 50.158,~~ inclusive, **as determined by the county engineer.**

2. The county engineer shall erect and maintain the signs of a kind and quality comparable to road information signs in a

manner designed to attract the attention of persons entering the area.

SECTION 8. General Terms.

1. All actions, proceedings, matters, and things heretofore taken, had and done by the County and its officers not inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are ratified and approved.
2. The Chair of the Board and officers of the County are authorized and directed to take all action necessary or appropriate to effectuate the provisions of this Ordinance. The District Attorney's Office is authorized to make non-substantive edits and corrections to this Ordinance.
3. All ordinances, resolutions, bylaws and orders, or parts thereof, in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent only of such inconsistency. This repealer shall not be construed to revive any ordinance, resolution, bylaw or order, or part thereof, heretofore repealed.
4. Each term and provision of this Ordinance shall be valid and shall be enforced to the extent permitted by law. If any term or provision of this Ordinance or the application thereof shall be deemed by a court of competent jurisdiction to be in violation of law or public policy, then it shall be deemed modified, ipso facto, to bring it within the limits of validity or enforceability, but if it cannot be so modified, then the offending provision or term shall be excised from this Ordinance. In any event, the remainder of this Ordinance, or the application of such term or provision to circumstances other than those to which it is invalid or unenforceable, shall not be affected.

[Business Impact Note: The Board of County Commissioners hereby finds that this ordinance does not impose a direct and significant economic burden upon a business, nor does it directly restrict the formation, operation or expansion of a business.]

Proposed on the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Proposed by Commissioner _____.

Passed on the _____ day of _____, 2026.

Vote:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent:

Chair
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST:

County Clerk

This ordinance shall be in force and effect from and after
_____, 2026.