Congresswoman Susie Lee: Good afternoon. We thought we'd do this in the middle of the day just for dramatic effects, so you all could understand the extreme heat that we're experiencing here in southern Nevada. I'm really honored to be here today to welcome EPA Administrator Michael Regan to our community as well as our partners at the federal level, state level, and of course our tribal partners here as well, and my partner and friend Congressman Steven Horsford. We're standing here next to Lake Mead, which is the main source of water for 25 million Americans. We expect that this lake as you can see by the bathtub ring keeps growing and growing to get down to about 22% of its full capacity by the end of the year. Unfortunately, our state along with much of the west has been hit hard by a mega drought. This is the worst drought in 12 centuries and we all know and feel that Nevada is at the epicenter of the drought and the climate crisis, and the only way we can begin to address this is through innovative solutions. And that's why I fought so hard for investments in water infrastructure,

water management and water recycling, including my large-scale water recycling bill, which was included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. It will help keep more water in Lake Mead and will ensure that generations of Nevadans have the water they need. I'm also proud to have helped pass the Wildlife Response and Drought Resiliency Act out of the house this past month. This included five of my bills to combat drought, promote water conservation, and invest in drought-proof water infrastructure projects that use 21st century data, tools, research and technologies. And most importantly, I'm incredibly eager to return to Washington, D.C., this evening so I can vote along with Congressman Horsford on the Inflation Reduction Act, which will not just make the United States’ most historic investment in climate change and climate resiliency, it will make a historic investment in drought relief measures. It will mitigate the harmful impact of drought by funding environmental restoration projects, funding conservation projects to increase water levels in the Colorado River. Right now, at this point as we all know, Las Vegas has been such a vibrant community and one that literally was created out of the desert, has been a world leader in tourism and in innovation. And I know we will take that same type of innovation and work with other states, who rely on the Colorado River to continue to address our drought and to continue to address our water crisis. And I know that I have no better partner in Washington than that of my friend and a fighter for southern Nevada Congressman Steven Horsford, and with that I'd like to welcome him to the podium.

(applause)

Congressman Steven Horsford: Thank you Susie. I’m honored to be here to join with you Congresswoman Susie Lee, in welcoming EPA Administrator Michael Regan to our community, to our state and to Lake Mead, which growing up here, this is one of the places where we came to recreate, where we used to really learn how to swim in the lake and to be able to fish. And just a few summers ago I was here with my kids and to see the decline of the water levels is just an impact to the quality of life to so many Nevadans, and people who rely on the water as Congresswoman Lee said. And there is no more important moment than now to take action to help preserve and protect Lake Mead and to address the climate crisis and the drought. And as Congresswoman Lee said, tomorrow we will vote in the House of Representatives to pass the Inflation Reduction Act, which in addition to lowering costs for everyday households on health care and on prescription drugs and on energy costs, it also invests $4 billion in addressing and mitigating the drought. But this work could not be possible without the partnership of the Biden-Harris Administration, EPA Administrator Michael Regan, Governor Steve Sisolak, Congresswoman Susie Lee who serves on the powerful appropriations committee and all of our federal partners who are working to ensure the resources get to where they need. And to our indigenous community leaders, who also have a stake in preserving the cultural and heritage artifacts that are also here. So, I want to thank everyone for being here. I'm going to proudly cast my vote in favor of this Inflation Reduction Act tomorrow for current and future generations of Nevadans who deserve to come to Lake Mead and to other places as we address the climate crisis and address the drought. Now I'd like to welcome the 16th Administrator for the United States EPA, Michael S. Regan. Michael, when we first invited you to come out here, I don't think we knew it was going to be the day before of such a historic vote, but it's just an indication of how important Nevada is to this administration and to the EPA that you are here today. Thank you for your leadership, not only on the climate crisis, but all the other work that you are leading on behalf of the Environmental Protection Agency. Thank you for being here and thank you for understanding the needs of our community and helping us.

Administrator Michael Regan: (Inaudible) Clean Air Act authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, to protect communities, and to reduce pollution that is driving these climate change impacts like those we're seeing behind me. Be it heat or water scarcity, we remain focused on making sure that we are doing all that we can to help communities build resilience to the impacts of climate change. Thank you again, Congresswoman Lee, thank you Congressman Horsford for your partnership in confronting this climate crisis and together we're going to get this done. Thank you.

(Applause)

(Inaudible question)

Congresswoman Susan Lee: Yes, there's a couple bills that I helped pass, the first was the OpenET Act, which basically, if you can't measure it, you can't conserve it. And right now, we have publicly available information from satellites, from NOAA, that we basically need a federal effort to combine all of that information into one place. I also have an Open Water Data Act, so it's really about, one being able to measure where the water is going, how it's being either used responsibly or even wasted and that will lead us to ways to create solutions to how we conserve it. Secondly, my water-- Large-Scale Water Recycling Act creates a grant program and funds it to the tune of $750 million to support such projects as the project that the Southern Nevada Water Authority has been partnering with LA Metro on. LA Metro plans to construct a large-scale water recycling facility that in tune will keep enough water for a half a million homes in Lake Mead. So, it's those types of innovative partnerships that will allow us-- we have seven states that rely on the Colorado River, and this is not just a Nevada problem, and it's one that we need to come together with all the states, not just measure, but create innovative solutions where we can serve and recycle reuse our water.

Unidentified Speaker: You talked about the vote tomorrow, the Inflation Reduction Act, can you just bullet point how that's going to affect us one more time, and specifically here in Nevada?

Congressman Steven Horsford: So, the Inflation Reduction Act does three primary things that will allow Medicare to finally be able to negotiate for lower prescription drug costs under Medicare Part D. It will expand benefits under the Affordable Care Act to continue to make health care affordable, and it will help invest in lowering energy costs. Specifically, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto worked to secure $4 billion for drought relief that's included in the bill. That will help agencies buy private water rights and help municipalities with conservation projects to help increase the level of water in the Colorado River system. It will also provide additional funding outside of grants, and existing governmental resources to prioritize water conservation efforts. And finally, it will allow both state and local government agencies and tribal governments to be able to negotiate for additional water rights, as we work to provide leadership on addressing the longer-term water needs as Congresswoman Susie Lee just laid out.

Candese Charles, Channel 8 News: You guys have already asked residents to go about conserving water. Are there any other restrictions that would be put in place, and how are you going about policing water usage as well in Nevada?

Congresswomen Susie Lee: There have been at the state level and local level efforts made. What we do at the federal level is provide federal funding, such as funding for water smart initiatives. That's an initiative where we provide the water authority, the funding, so they can incentivize people to move from non-usable turf to more drought resilient landscaping. For instance, many people receive a rebate from the Southern Nevada Water Authority order to put in fake turf, artificial turf in their backyards, and things like that. So, our role at the federal level is to provide the funding. At the state and the local is where they actually do the monitoring and the oversight on how people are reducing their water use.

Candese Charles: Thank you.

Congressman Steven Horsford: And if I could just elaborate one additional point. The administrator just joined me at one of my senior center locations at Doolittle, and one of the seniors at the end came up to me and she said, "I'm low income, how do I work to get access to some of the funding to take out grass, to retrofit my house to reduce my energy cost?" And several of the provisions that are included in the Inflation Reduction Act will help seniors like that one receives the benefits and the funding that they need, particularly those who can't afford to pay for those retrofits themselves. And I want to commend the Southern Nevada Water Authority and our local officials for the work that they have done. This issue of the drought didn't just start. They've been working on it for decades. I remember serving on a drought commission back in the early 2000s before I was ever elected to anything. So this has been a priority. I want to thank the residents of southern Nevada, and the businesses for doing their part, but as the administrator said, this is not only a Nevada problem. It impacts us disproportionately because the lake is right here, but we have to work through a coordination with the other states that receive an allocation of water from the Colorado River to ultimately get to the long-term outcomes that we need. Thank you.

Unidentified Speaker: This will be our last question.

Unidentified Speaker: This is just for Administrator Regan. Is this your first time to like meet in person and if so, just share a little of your reaction…