

Nev. Legislature may fund cloud seeding

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

As a late-season snowstorm swept toward the Sierra Friday, scientists prepared to do their thing. In this case, that meant activating mountaintop generators that spray chemicals into storm clouds, encouraging formation of ice crystals that fall as precious snow.

“It looks pretty good. We are pretty confident we will get the opportunity,” Frank McDonough, an atmospheric scientist with Reno’s Desert Research Institute, said of the approaching storm’s potential..

And for the first time in six years, Nevada’s cloud-seeding program could get a little help from the Legislature, which is considering a bill to help fund a financially struggling effort. Local leaders, meanwhile, want to explore the potential of seeding Sierra storms in different ways, including through the use of manned aircraft and drones.

Even last winter, by the far the driest in a string of four dry ones, cloud-seeding paid off, DRI scientists recently reported to the Western Regional Water Commission. The commission is again being asked to contribute \$100,000 toward cloud-seeding operations next winter.

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