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Provo City Mayor
Testimony on Y Mountain Access Enhancement Act (HR 4484)
28 June 2012

Provo City has long been directly associated with its high quality of life and is consistently recognized as one of the most favorable places in the country to raise a family. This is largely due to the priorities we set as a community. At the very heart of those priorities is Brigham Young University – a world-renowned institution whose reputation is that of a responsible, creditable steward of resources.

Recently, it has come to my attention that an option is available to transfer ownership of what Provo residents have referred to for years as “Y Mountain” from the Forest Service into the hands of Brigham Young University.

The background to this story is both appropriate and necessary as you go through your decision-making process.

Our Y is a signal on our eastern mountain to many people. In an interesting way it represents home. It identifies us and tells people that they have arrived to the site of something very unique and special.

In 1906 Brigham Young University was a mere three year old institution still searching for its identity. On a spring day, a feud between the classes of 1906 and 1907 would surprisingly lead to the creation of an enduring symbol of unity and identity.

The members of the class of 1907 decided that they wanted to do something to stake their claim. They marched up the mountain due east of campus and carved the numbers 07 in the side of the mountain as a symbol of their class superiority. This irritated the senior class members who decided to take down the 7 and replace it with the 6 of their class. Physical altercations ensued which had to be broken up by then-President Brimhall.

President Brimhall proclaimed that, instead of fighting, they would work together to construct one symbol both classes of students could rally around. He declared that they would replace the numbers on the mountain with the letters BYU which would stand for all students.

On an April morning in 1906, students from both classes set out to construct the first letter – a 380 foot tall monumental Y. They formed a line and transported bags of a lime and sand mixture from the bottom of the hill to the top where students would dump the contents into the outline previously defined by drafting students. This process took significantly longer than anticipated. It took so long that many

students questioned the benefit of completing their objective. While leaving the project one third complete – Y Mountain was born.

This once BYU-owned 80 acre parcel, including most of the trail, is now under ownership of the United States Forest Service although Brigham Young University has managed the Forest Service's portion of the trail for the past 50 years.

The University has purchased the western most property and turned it into a well-maintained trailhead that marries perfectly with the upgrades, including signs and seating, it completed on the trail itself. From the perspective of the everyday observer, BYU owns and operates each interest of the mountain.

Allowing Brigham Young to purchase this property would help preserve the trail for the short and long terms. It would provide a private owner with an impeccable record of sound stewardship of environmental resources to manage and maintain the trail. A BYU-owned trail offers a consistent and predictable ownership whose mission won't change and whose vision for Y Mountain and access to the trail will not be disrupted.

I, along with the residents of Provo City, support the Y Mountain Access Management Act and appreciate the language in the legislation which mandates BYU pay a fair market value for the property, covers administrative and appraisal costs, and uses the dollars to decrease our federal budget deficit.

I look forward to working with Brigham Young University, the Forest Service, and their team members in continuing to make Provo City the best kept secret in the west.