

Committee on Resources

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Mr. Clint Bentley **Commissioner, Nevada Wildlife Commission**

Chairman Radanovich...Committee Members

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to state both support and concerns on HR 4593 Lincoln County Lands Bill.

I'm representing two entities today with similar platforms and resolutions.

First as a member of the Nevada State Wildlife Commission and our resolution regarding wilderness and Second for the Nevada Land Users Coalition and the platform that they adopted for statewide wilderness.

I have three items in the proposed land bill I would like to address and a fourth item; definitive wild life management language.

The first item is "Cherry Stems" in general. Our congressional delegates and their respective staffs did a very proficient job of recognizing that there is a real need to utilize existing roads and ways as access into the proposed wilderness areas in order that all people be able to enjoy the wilderness experiences and that the traditional uses can continue without a negative impact on the wilderness areas. Reasonable access is extremely important to these proposed wilderness areas in order to maintain effective monitoring of habitat and wildlife.

The second item is the Silver State OHV Trail. We strongly support the concept for this trail system and believe that it is in the best interest that some trail system be installed and managed. However, some of the proposed routing on this trail has some serious conflicts with deer migration routes and the springs and seeps that existing wildlife are now using. We feel that the input from Nevada Department of Wildlife on this issue should be addressed.

The third item is the proposed wilderness areas, including recommended and non recommended areas, and the release of some of the WSA's. This effort demonstrates the time, effort and research that the bill crafters have expended. I do not totally agree with the final draft but as with most of the interest groups I can certainly live with the areas that have been designated with the exception of the Delamar Wilderness Area.

We adamantly oppose the Delamar Wilderness Area. In the past six years with the combined effort of the Nevada Department of Wildlife and the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn and Nevada Bighorns Unlimited Reno, there have been seven privately funded wildlife guzzlers constructed at a cost of approximately \$210,000 and in excess of 2,500 hours of donated labor. There has been three bighorn sheep transplants (augmentations) which have been partially funded by private groups and the Heritage fund for an additional cost of approximately \$50,000 and 500 hours of donated labor.

There is an ongoing wildlife damage project to assist the sheep to reach their threshold. Under the existing language this would close out the ongoing wildlife damage project seriously impacting all the previous work that has been accomplished to date.

This brings me to the fourth point; which is truly critical to the well being of this and future wilderness areas within Nevada. Definitive Wildlife Management Language.

When the original 1964 wilderness bill was passed I don't believe that the State's right to manage wildlife was intended to be as curtailed as it has become. If there were definitive language such as :

Maintain the established use of gas and/or electrical equipment and motorized vehicles, including aircraft, to survey, capture, transplant and monitor wildlife populations, provide for repair, maintenance, and reconstruction of existing wildlife water developments, and for the installation of new water developments.

Habitat rehabilitation and restoration projects will be conducted as needs are identified.

Maintain the established use of mechanical equipment and motorized vehicles, including aircraft, to manage and remove, when necessary, feral stock and/or wild horses and burros.

Wildlife damage control in wilderness may be necessary to protect Federally listed threatened or endangered species, prevent transmission of diseases or parasites affecting other wildlife and humans, or to prevent serious losses of wildlife and/or domestic livestock. Additionally, as a pretreatment to reintroductions and/or augmentations of indigenous fish and wildlife species, wildlife damage management may be necessary to reduce conflicts with indigenous species.

No where in this language is there any intent to be able to "cut a road" into a wilderness area to service a wildlife guzzler.

With the inclusion of this type of wildlife management language and the appropriate "cherry stems" we could support whole heartedly these proposed wilderness areas and potentially many other areas.

Thank you for your indulgence and I welcome you one and all to come out to Nevada and enjoy our non-voting friends, those being, our State's wildlife and our great outdoors that Nevadan's are so proud of.