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Dr. Paul T. Killpatrick
President, Great Basin College
Elko, Nevada

Mining and Communities
Addressing Sustainable Development Issues

Testimony to the
House Resources Sub-Committee on Energy and Mineral Resources

Field Oversight Hearing
“ Sustainable Development Opportunities in Mining Communities”

Reno, Nevada
Washoe County Commission Chambers
October 25, 2004
10:00 a.m.

Congressman Gibbons and distinguished participants:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this sub-committee today. My name is Dr. Paul T. Killpatrick. I am the President of Great Basin College in Elko, Nevada.

I will speak to you today on the importance of the college's role in post-mining community. We have a long history of being responsive to the needs of the communities. We have developed programs to support the needs of business and industry in the past, and we will develop those needs as they change in the future. We have been responsible for creating the training and educational means to diversify the economy. One of the ways we do this is through my own participation in the ECEDA, the Elko County Economic Development Agency. ECEDA helps to create an environment that will be attractive to business and industry who may wish to locate in Elko County.

The college addresses the community's needs from the perspective of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. We provide the community with the opportunity to develop the tools that will fulfill physiological and safety needs by providing training for the workforce. That training and the many other opportunities the college provides also fulfill the esteem and self actualization needs of the community.

We also have a great responsibility for our region. Our service area covers the northeastern quarter of the state of Nevada, approximately 45,000 square miles. We serve Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander and White Pine counties. Those five counties represent a huge portion of the mining community. We take a considerable amount of responsibility for the stability of their future. We are the web that can connect the needs of all of those counties and the communities that lie within them.

As an institute of higher education, we have a responsibility to contribute to our society. We're very interested in graduating students who will contribute as good citizens in their communities. We do many things to contribute to our society beyond the realm of training workforce. We provide many social and cultural outlets for the community. What we can provide in those areas will be very important to businesses and industries that may be considering locating in northeastern Nevada. It will be important that the college can remain strong in the future.

We have created partnerships with many businesses and industries, but the partnerships we have created with the mining community have been the most significant. In the past, those partnerships centered on workforce training, but they have expanded to include generous contributions to the capital growth of the

college. The mining companies have been progressive partners with the college in working towards sustainability of the economy. Workshops for the future have been held on campus on a number of occasions. What we have been interested in, and what the mining companies have been interested in as they have worked with us towards the future, is creating conditions where those who chose to live in a rural community can continue to live in a rural community.

How is the college equipped to help sustain development? First of all, we have a talented faculty and staff with a great interest in the future of the region. Secondly, we have the infrastructure to provide the education and training for the future. Our classroom, lab and library facilities are first rate, and through an extensive fiber-optic system, we have the ability to deliver via inter-active video and internet connections throughout the region, and indeed around the world.

The college continues with its partnerships in the community. We host business, industry and non-profit organizations, serving as a hub for many community activities. We are about to embark on entrepreneurial initiatives that will include students from the third grade through their baccalaureate degrees, providing opportunities that will contribute to the future of our students, their families and their communities.

Great Basin College has a reputation for innovation that has been building for nearly forty years. Our history is peppered with "firsts," we were the first community college in the state, the first community college to offer baccalaureate degrees, and we pioneered the concept of an integrative education, becoming the model for Nevada State College and colleges across the nation.

We are eager to be, and in fact, already are, integral to the sustainable development of northeastern Nevada.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.