

Committee on Resources

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Superintendent
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Testimony
Before the Committee on Resources
United States House of Representatives

Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands' Oversight Hearing on the Dispensation of Funds From the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act
December 4, 2003

Members of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands.

Thank you for allowing me, Rob Roberts, Superintendent of Nye County School District, Nye County Nevada the opportunity to provide testimony concerning the dispensation of funds from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. The Nye County School District requests increasing the percentage of profits being distributed to the Nevada Department of Education from the sale of land to benefit the educational opportunities of students in Nye County.

Background

The Nye County School District is the largest geographical school district in the lower 48 states. It encompasses 18,400 square miles with 17 schools serving over 5, 400 students. We employ over 700 certified and classified staff, and operate 74 busses which drive over 1,000,000 miles a year. Over 98% of our tax base is owned by the Federal Government thus denying us the opportunity of an adequate tax base to support the education of our children. Nye County is home to the Nellis Air Force Bombing Range, some 3,000 square miles yet we see no compensation. We are the Low Level nuclear Storage Site for the United States. Nye County has been subjected to over 1,000 Nuclear Tests, rendering that land unfit for human existence. And with the Yucca Mountain Project on the verge of licensing for high level storage of nuclear waste for the entire nation, the students of Nye County still see little to no Federal compensation for their education.

The Nye County School District is a diverse community with one commonality, being economically disadvantaged. Some 56% of Nye County Schools are Title I, 49.5% of our students qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch. Nye County classroom computers are averaging 5 years of use. Many of our classrooms are in modulars, several schools offer no air conditioning and are not ADA accessible. Funding for essential services are woefully inadequate. NCSD per-pupil funding is approximately 5,560 dollars, with a national average of approximately 7,000 you can see a \$7,776,000 per year funding gap. With these funds we could offer the education our students deserve and federal No Child Left Behind legislation demands.

Nye County School District desperately needs monies for essential educational support and school Capital Projects:

1. New School Busses – Currently average route bus is twenty-five years old
2. Updated Textbooks
3. Technology in every classroom and Internet, Video connection to every school
4. After-school programs including Saturdays and Summer School
5. School Safety improvements
6. Air-conditioning and ADA assistance for several schools
7. Staff Professional Development Training
8. The ability to staff teachers in remote location, i.e. Special Education, OT, PT, School Psychologists and medical staff

Presently approximately 5% of profits from land sales makes its way to education in Nevada, while that is helpful, increasing the local land sales profit distributed to school districts in rural Nevada would greatly improve our ability to assist the students impacted by local land sales and federal ownership and impact of their land.

The Nye County School District supports continuation of the allocation process and an increase of the percentage going directly to the students of Nye County and other southern Nevada school districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information concerning education in Nye County and Southern Nevada.