

September 30, 2013

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Subcommittee on Public Lands and
Environmental Regulation
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1017 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Public Lands and
Environmental Regulation
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1017 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the city of Las Vegas, I write to whole-heartedly support the *Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2013* (S.974/H.R. 2015). We worked closely with the Nevada Congressional Delegation to designate the Tule Springs area as a National Monument in the 112th Congress, and we look forward to moving the bill forward in this Congress.

As you may know, this legislation enjoys broad support in Southern Nevada and would result in many mutually beneficial outcomes. The city of Las Vegas supports swift passage of S.974/H.R.2015 as it is imperative to protect paleontological and sensitive plant resources. We also believe that the legislation would create opportunities for economic development and job creation while providing for responsible urban development of adjacent lands, and allowing for necessary infrastructure to service existing developed areas.

Again, we strongly support S.974/H.R.2015 and look forward to its successful passage.

Respectfully,

Steven Ross
City Councilman, City of Las Vegas, Nevada
Ward 6

C: Chairman Doc Hastings, U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
 Ranking Member Peter DeFazio, U.S. House Natural Resources Committee
 U.S. Senator Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
 U.S. Senator Dean Heller
 U.S. Congressman Joe Heck
 U.S. Congressman Mark Amodei
 U.S. Congresswoman Dina Titus
 U.S. Congressman Steven Horsford

- ORAL COMMENTS-

City Councilman Steve Ross

Thursday, October 3, 2013, 10:00 am

1324 Longworth House Office Building, Room 1324

- Good Morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Steve Ross, City Councilman for the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, representing Council Ward 6
- I am here to support the Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2013. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today about this important bill for our Southern Nevada Community. It's an honor to testify before two committee members from the state of Nevada, Congressman Mark Amodei and Congressman Steven Horsford.
- There are three key points I will make: 1) This bill has broad community support; 2) it will create jobs; and 3) conserve important resources.
- First, Broad Community Support. It is rare that an elected public official has the privilege of working on legislation that is being actively supported by all sectors of a community. In particular, there is active support from NV Energy, Nellis Air Force Base, Las Vegas Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, elementary and high school educators, area colleges and universities, including the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Public Lands Institute, and environmental and conservation groups. Representatives from these organizations, among others, are working closely with a group of concerned citizens and have developed public support for this bill.
- The Board of Clark County Commissioners, the Las Vegas City Council, the North Las Vegas City Council, the Nevada State Legislature, and the Tribal Council of the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe unanimously passed resolutions urging Congress to pass legislation creating a national monument. With your permission, I would like to submit their letters of support for the record.
- Second, Job Creation. One of the reasons this bill has such committed support is because it creates opportunities for economic development and job creation while providing for responsible urban development of adjacent lands, and allowing for necessary infrastructure to service existing developed areas. It would attract national and international visitors from a wide range of interests including educational, scientific, cultural and natural resources.

- I'd like to draw your attention to Section 5. This provision, known as the "Las Vegas Job Creation Zone" will transfer land from the Bureau of Land Management to the City of Las Vegas to be made available for private development through competitive auction. The proceeds of the sale will stay with the federal government. This transfer of land from federal control to private ownership will facilitate important economic goals for the City of Las Vegas by making surplus federal land available for commercial development in accordance with local land use plans. The City expects the release of lands will create thousands of jobs over the next decade. This surplus land, supported by urban infrastructure and amenities, is ideally situated to provide development opportunities for businesses supporting Creech and Nellis Air Force Bases.
- Third, Conserve Important Resources. The site is one of the most significant fossil bed sites in North America depicting life in the Ice Age. Fossils from prehistoric camels, mammoths, giant sloths, lions and other animals and plants have been unearthed at this site. Thousands of Pleistocene era fossils have been found in Tule Springs, and thousands remain for scientific excavation, examination and public viewing. Fossils and fossilized pollen in the area span nearly 200,000 years of time, offering important insight into at least two Ice Ages and multiple warming and cooling periods.
- I have visited this site on a number of occasions, and personally seen tusks bigger than me that came from Ice Age Columbian mammoths. This site should be set aside so others can visit and learn from these resources. Tule Springs has allowed faculty from UNLV and other academic institutions to get students practical paleontological and geological experience. The site provides excellent educational opportunities within close proximity to a large city for local students, visiting school groups and the general public. This is a unique situation for most fossil locations.
- For these reasons: Broad community support, job creation, and conserving important resources, I am honored to be here to ask you to support passage of the Las Vegas Valley Public Land and Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Act of 2013.
- Thank you again for the opportunity to be here. I would be happy to answer any questions.