

**Testimony of George Dini, Mayor, City of Yerington, Nevada**  
**In Support of**  
**H.R. 696, Lyon County Economic Development and Conservation Act**  
**Presented to the**  
**House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation**  
**April 18, 2013**

Chairman Bishop, Members of the Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify in favor of H.R. 696, the Lyon County Economic Development and Conservation Act introduced by Congressman Horsford and supported by Congressman Amodei, Congresswoman Titus and Congressman Heck.

I am proud to serve as the Mayor of Yerington, Nevada. I am joined today by Lyon County Manager Jeff Page on behalf of the Lyon County Commission, to jointly express the support of the 3,156 citizens of Yerington and 52,000 citizens of Lyon County and to urge the Committee to pass this bill. This land sale represents the economic future of our City and County.

I also express the support of Nevada Governor Sandoval, and a multitude of local and regional support.

The City of Yerington is located in Northern Nevada in the Mason Valley and we have a long proud history of mining and agriculture. However, our current economy is in bad shape. Our unemployment in Lyon County has averaged over 15% during the past year and our citizens are suffering greatly. Over the past 10 years, we have been fortunate to receive over \$20 million in Federal funding that has been critical to maintaining our public infrastructure; however, this is not how our citizens want to survive as a community. We seek jobs and the ability to work hard to raise our families in a growing and vibrant community. We need long-term stable jobs for our citizens and an industry that will provide sustainable economic growth for decades.

H.R. 696 mandates the fair market sale of approximately 10,400 acres of federal lands - just 1% of 975,000 acres of federal lands in Lyon County - to the City of Yerington for economic development, a recreation events center and open space purposes.

The lands that will be conveyed have no current important uses. There is no threatened or endangered species habitat, no water resources, and no significant cultural resources. This is barren land that has few redeeming natural qualities.

The purchase of these lands will allow the City of Yerington to annex the Pumpkin Hollow Mine site, sell water and sewer services to the mine operation, benefit from taxes paid by the mine, allows the City to grow economically and benefit from greatly needed recreation, cultural and economic development lands.

The legislation also designates land for the Wovoka Wilderness, which is located in the South Pine Grove Hills. The land was identified as part of a local consultation process. In addition to

wilderness, the legislation protects the County against a potential listing of the sage grouse on the Endangered Species List, protects existing grazing interests, maintains public access on existing roads, and provides continued access to recreation and hunting. On December 3, 2012, the Lyon Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution supporting the designation as outlined in H.R. 696. I also support this designation.

For over four years, the City of Yerington has been working with Nevada Copper to craft a development plan for the Pumpkin Hollow Mine that will ensure the City of Yerington will economically benefit from the development of the mine creating a sustainable future for our City. The Pumpkin Hollow Copper mine that sits on private lands near the City of Yerington. With or without this legislation, Nevada Copper will develop and produce millions of tons of valuable minerals. The question really is whether the Yerington will benefit from this new mining project.

Nevada Copper proposes to start full project development - an investment of approximately \$1 billion - starting in 2013. In March, the company secured \$200 million to initiate the development of the underground mine and mineral processing facilities at Pumpkin Hollow. The company would like to invest another \$800 million to build out the much larger integrated open pit and underground mining operation. However, that level of financing will only happen subject to passage of H.R. 696.

The integrated mine operation facilitated by this legislation will create over 800 direct mine operations jobs and up to 500 construction jobs. Using the current published jobs multipliers a total of over 2,000-3,000 direct and indirect jobs would be created by the mine.

The timely passage of this legislation cannot be over-stated. We are operating on a tight timeline. With the financing they have received, Nevada Copper is initiating detailed siting, engineering and design of project infrastructure. This legislation will allow Yerington to work with the Nevada Copper to locate infrastructure for water, sewer, and power for both mine development and the other uses contemplated by the City. Both the City and Lyon County will be able to share in property, sales, utility and net proceeds of mines taxes from mine operations. If this legislation is not successful, the mine will proceed, but as in the past, Yerington will simply have to deal with the impacts with no real benefits to the City other than some jobs for citizens.

As importantly, with this contiguous block of land, the City and Nevada Copper can begin to plan for the future, long after mining is complete. The development agreement between the City and Nevada Copper will ensure that the Company leaves behind resources and assets that will provide sustainable economic growth for the City. H.R. 696 solidifies the critical partnership that will provide economic enhancement for decades—and at no cost to the American taxpayer.

Some of the lands will also be utilized for economic development as commercial and light industrial needs increase to support the operations of the mine. Also, the City is proposing a

portion of the lands be utilized for renewable energy development such as solar energy. Lastly, some of the lands will be utilized by Nevada Copper to maximize the mining operations on their patented lands.

As you can see, the sale of these lands to the City of Yerington will have a dramatic, positive impact by increasing jobs, the investment in Nevada, and increased tax revenues for the City, Lyon County and the State of Nevada. It will also generate jobs and economic activity in over 20 states nationwide for equipment, materials and supplies.

Mr. Chairman, we are not here with our hand out asking Congress to give the City some public lands in the hope of attracting economic development. We are asking to pay fair market value to acquire a very small percentage of federal lands that have little or no use to the public in order to enhance and increase development that is already occurring at the Pumpkin Hollow site. I cannot express enough the importance of this project to the future of our City and I urge the Committee to support H.R. 696. I am happy to answer any questions you might have or provide further information.