

## **FLAG Remarks \_Lt. Governor Hutchison (NV)**

Federal Lands Action Group  
Washington, DC  
4/26/16

I would like to begin by thanking you, Chairman Stewart, and the rest of the members of the Federal Lands Action Group (FLAG) for the opportunity to come here today and express my support for Congressman Amodei's bill: HR 1484 – Honor the Nevada Enabling Act of 1864 Act.

My view of the purpose of public service and my work as Lt. Governor broadly is to support and pursue ideas and policies that will expand opportunity and prosperity for all Nevadans. In short, to do all in my power to fight for Nevadans and their families to live the American Dream. My specific duties as outlined by state statute are related to Tourism, Economic Development, and Transportation. All of these issues in our state are impacted by public lands in one way or another.

I believe that in most circumstances the government closest to the people, governs best. As long as I have served as an elected official, I have advocated for the targeted transfer of federal lands to the states as well as increased meaningful collaboration between the federal government and state and local stakeholders on all public lands issues - big and small.

In 2013, I had the pleasure of serving as a State Senator and voting in support of AB 227 – the bill that established the Nevada Lands Management Task Force. The recommendations from the Nevada Lands Management Task Force were passed during the 2105 legislative session in the form of Senate Joint Resolution 1.

For your clarification and increased understanding, I will detail the Task force's charge, makeup, and recommendations.

### **Nevada Lands Management Task Force: Overview**

#### **1. Established by AB227 during 2013 legislature**

- Required economic analysis including cost and revenues associated with transferring federal lands to the State
- Required a proposed plan for the administration and management of any lands transferred
- Required identification of any lands that the Task Force determines would be included in any potential transfer

2. Task force consisted of:
  - 17 members; one from each county in Nevada
  - Staffed by members of NV Association of Counties and contracted Intertech Services, Inc for data analysis
  - Worked in conjunction with numerous local stakeholders
3. Reported quarterly to Interim Legislative Committee on Public Lands
4. Passed out of 2015 Nevada Legislature as resolution to Congress (SJR1)

### **Nevada Lands Management Task Force: Results**

#### **1. Identification of land for transfer – 7.2 million acres initially**

#### **2. Potential Lands Considered/ Exempted:**

- Public lands identified for exclusion from transfer:
  - a) Wilderness
  - b) National Parks
  - c) National Monuments
  - d) National Recreation Areas
  - e) Wildlife Refuges
  - f) National Conservation Areas
  - g) Federally recognized Reservations and other lands administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs
  - h) BLM areas of critical concern for the Desert Tortoise
- Public lands identified for transfer (7.2 million acres):
  - a) BLM checkerboard lands along I-80: 4.2 million acres
  - b) BLM lands under existing Recreation & Public Purposes Act lease: 200k acres
  - c) BLM lands authorized under Rights-of-Way granted to state and local governments as well as non-linear Rights-of Way granted to private parties: 255k acres
  - d) BLM Split Estate (BLM holds subsurface rights while surface estate is privately held): 300K

#### **3. Economic Analysis:**

- Significant net revenues to state from transfer: \$7.78 - \$28.59 per acre/ annual potential net revenues between \$56 million and \$205 million

- Majority of transferred lands held in trust and net revenues from land would be dedicated to the management of the land as well as other specific beneficiaries including:
  - a. Public K-12 education
  - b. Public higher education
  - c. Public specialized education
  - d. Public mental health and medical health services
  - e. Social, senior, and veterans services
  - f. Public programs for candidate and listed threatened or endangered species recovery plan development and implementation
  - g. Local governments (to pay for services and infrastructure required on these lands which would otherwise be financed through property tax or other revenues available to local government)
  
- Concept of self-funded expansion of state land management function was embraced a goal (no NV state general funds to be used for management of transferred lands)
  - a. Phased transition of federal land would allow for cost absorption of land management function in a fiscally neutral and sustainable manner
  - b. Selection of lands for initial transfer have immediate potential for collateralization, minimal management costs, and could generate net revenues in short term
  
- Estimated first year expenses for management expected to amount to nearly \$27 million (this would be held as short to intermediate term debt)
  - a. This cost would be offset as soon as possible through the sale of select parcels of transferred land necessary to repay debt and generate start-up capital (estimated to be about 30k acres of lands previously designated by BLM for disposal)
  
- After Year 1, the management of the transferred land projected to be self-supporting.

#### **4. Administration & Management:**

- Lands transferred would be administered by the State of Nevada, Division of State Lands
- Estimated staffing levels would range from 96-162 persons upon the completion of the lands transfer
- Task Force believes that due to existing statutory and regulatory environmental land use review, oversight and approval/ denial authority vested with the State of Nevada agencies and local government that lands would be administered in an environmentally friendly manner which would preclude the need to create extra-

regulatory mechanisms for state lands such as state level of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

- a) BLM land designated as Solar Energy Zone: 65k acres
- b) BLM lands leased for geothermal exploration and utilization: 1.05 million acres
- c) BLM lands authorized for disposal within enacted and introduced federal legislation: 250k acres

What we are seeking through the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations is not only in the best interests of our economy, infrastructure, energy development, etc., but also very important to the future sustainability and ecology of those lands. I am proud to be here today to support the continuation of the Task Force's recommendations through HR 1484 and commend Congressman Amodei for sponsoring the bill.