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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 23, 2010

NEWS RELEASE

Legislative Committee on Public Lands (NRS 218E.510)

Date: Friday, July 30, 2010
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Place: Bristlecone Convention Center
Sage and Juniper Rooms
150 Sixth Street
Ely, Nevada

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PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE TO MEET IN ELY

Senator Dean A. Rhoads (R-Tuscarora), Chair of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands, announced that the Committee will hold its fifth and final meeting of the 2009-2010 Legislative Interim at the Bristlecone Convention Center in Ely on Friday, July 30, at 8:30 a.m. The agenda will be available on Monday.

At the request of Senator Rhoads, the meeting will begin with a presentation by a representative of the El Paso Corporation on its recent agreement to donate \$20 million to two environmental organizations in exchange for the withdrawal of objections to El Paso's proposed 680-mile natural gas pipeline across Nevada. According to the Western Watersheds Project, its stated priority for the use of the funds is to purchase and permanently retire grazing permits. The Committee will also hear presentations from the Nevada Cattlemen's Association, the Western Legacy Alliance, and other experts on rangeland resources.

Rhoads stated, "The Committee wants an explanation from El Paso as to why the Corporation made an agreement with the Western Watersheds Project, an organization whose stated goal is to eliminate grazing on public lands, and why local residents and the livestock industry were not consulted." Rhoads went on to explain, "Retiring grazing permits will have impacts far beyond the individual ranchers who choose to sell. When ranches close

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down, that means fewer jobs, which translates into less money for all the local businesses. Rural economies are already struggling in many parts of our State and this effort by outside environmental organizations to eliminate grazing on public lands should be of concern to all Nevadans.”

The Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Great Basin National Park will also have representatives at the meeting to update the Committee on their programs and activities.

As is the Committee’s custom, local government representatives have been invited to the meeting. Representatives from Elko, Eureka, and White Pine Counties will advise the Committee about their concerns and experiences relating to public lands and water issues, and a group of concerned citizens studying wilderness issues in Humboldt County will also address the Committee. **“One of the benefits of having the Committee hold meetings outside of Carson City and Las Vegas is the opportunity to hear from county commissioners and others about their experiences and insights into the complex federal land management issues they deal with daily.”**

The Chair of the Legislative Committee to Oversee the Western Regional Water Commission is also slated to update the Committee on the Oversight Committee’s activities.

Finally, during the work session portion of the meeting, Committee members will consider a list of possible actions compiled during the four meetings held in the last seven months. The possible actions include legislation to be considered during the 2011 Legislative Session, letters to federal agencies and others urging certain actions, or statements of the Committee’s positions on various issues. **“At this meeting, we will look at the list of proposed actions and decide what to pursue. The list covers a wide range of topics, including federal legislation, off-highway vehicles, renewable energy, water, and wild horses, to name a few,”** Rhoads explained. **“Public input is as important now as it was at our first meeting.”**

Concluded Rhoads, **“As we finish our work for the 2009–2010 Interim, the Committee wants to thank the many people who took time from their busy schedules to testify before the Committee and share their knowledge and concerns, as well as the public officials, from all levels of government, who made presentations at the Committee’s request.”**

The Legislative Committee on Public Lands was created in 1983 to review and comment on federal land management policies and practices and to provide a forum for the discussion of public lands matters.

The members of the Committee are: Senator Terry Care (D-Las Vegas); Senator John J. Lee (D-Las Vegas); Senator David R. Parks (D-Las Vegas); Senator Dean A. Rhoads (R-Tuscarora); Assemblyman Paul Aizley (D-Las Vegas); Assemblyman David P. Bobzien (D-Reno); Assemblyman John C. Carpenter (R-Elko); Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn (D-Las Vegas); and Clark County Commissioner Tom Collins. Alternate members are: Senator Mike McGinness (R-Fallon); Senator Michael A. Schneider (D-Las Vegas); Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea (R-Eureka); and Assemblywoman Ellen B. Spiegel (D-Henderson).

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