MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Seventy-Fourth Session
March 23, 2007

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Marilyn K. Kirkpatrick at 9:04 a.m., on Friday, March 23, 2007, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda (Exhibit A), the Attendance Roster (Exhibit B), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature’s website at www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick, Chair
Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson
Assemblyman Bob Beers
Assemblyman David Bobzien
Assemblyman Chad Christensen
Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn
Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea
Assemblyman Ruben Kihuen
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell
Assemblyman James Settelmeyer
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart
Assemblywoman RoseMary Womack

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Marcus Conklin, Assembly District No. 37
Assemblyman John Carpenter, Assembly District No. 33
Chair Kirkpatrick:
[Roll called. Quorum present.]

We will begin with Assembly Bill 299.

**Assembly Bill 299:** Makes various changes to provisions concerning youth shelters. (BDR 20-785)
Assemblyman Marcus Conklin, Assembly District No. 37:
You have before you this morning Assembly Bill 299, which brings forth an issue that is near and dear to my heart. As many of you are aware, I have been involved with homeless youth for many years in Las Vegas. It is my out of legislative time passion. The 2001 Session brought forth, as an organization, language dealing with the Right-to-Shelter law. That law codified the ability for service providers to help youth under the age of 18 without having liability. Prior to that, there had been statutes on the books for almost 100 years that indicated a person under the age of 18 required parental consent for any services. If you were homeless or a runaway without parental guardianship, you could not go into a doctor’s office for medical help without parental consent. The unfortunate thing is that many of these kids are not on the street by their own volition; they have been thrown away by their parents.

The same would be considered for folks who wanted to give food; you could not get food. Technically, it would be against the law. Service providers were afraid to participate for fear of not being able to provide services for the adult population. Their license would be revoked if they were in violation of the statute. The Right-to-Shelter law was passed in 2001. What we have found over the past six years there is not an adequate definition in statute to define what we mean by homeless youth. When you put the term "youth" in, we, as a service provider or as members of a service-providing organization, understand youth to be under the age of 18. This is the federal definition and an applied standard. Once they turn 18 they have the right to make their own decisions and do not require guardianship in the eyes of the law unless they are emancipated minors. This is not specifically defined in the statute. Service providers who say they help the youth could still use money set aside for youth to service adults.

This bill clearly lays out a definition of what a homeless youth or a youth runaway means in statute. It is designed to mirror federal law under the McKinney-Vinto Act. I have with me today the Executive Director of the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth who is also a trustee of the Nevada Youth Foundation.

Kathleen Boutin, Director, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth:
We need to be able to define a homeless youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vinto Act, which defines a youth as somebody under the age of 18 who lacks a regular fixed and night time residence. The act goes into a specific definition of an inadequate residence would be, such as not a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. It goes into public spaces and garages. We counted over 2,000 youth in southern Nevada when we did a homeless youth count and found on any given night there are 300 unaccompanied minors who
sleep in the streets and roof tops. We have a program called Safe Place in cooperation with Terrible Herbst in Pahrump, Mesquite, and throughout the Las Vegas Valley. In the north it is facilitated through McDonald’s. Any youth can go into one of these establishments and receive help if they are under the age of 18, and we can shelter them in one of our sheltering programs.

This has been a very good service to the communities in the State. We are now to the point where we have to start raising money and funding these shelter programs. It is competitive in working with the adult populations, and if we can define youth as someone under the age of 18, it would be beneficial to us moving forward in our service delivery provision.

Ted Olivas, Board Member, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth:
I support this bill, and echo the comments of Assemblyman Conklin, as well as Ms. Boutin.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Are there any questions?

Assemblyman Settelmeyer:
I have tried to search for United States Code, Title 42, Section 11301 for the definition. Could I have somebody give me the definition?

Assemblyman Conklin:
Rather than read this, what if I provide you with a copy? I will have it down here before we adjourn (Exhibit C).

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Does anyone else have any questions? [There were none.]

Is there anyone else that would like to speak in favor of A.B. 299?

John Emerson, Nevada Legislative Advocate, Nevada-Sierra District, Board of Church & Society, Committee on Children and Poverty of the California-Nevada Conference of the United Methodist Church:
I want to bring the voice of the religious community to the support of A.B. 299. Like other faith traditions, the Methodist Church has, over centuries, spent time and resources reaching out to the homeless. It is part of our mission, our reason for existing. We acknowledge that other non-profit agencies are doing the same. The phenomenon of homeless youth, as you know, has been on the increase. This bill will enable counties to craft ordinances, which in turn will help communities' shelter homeless youth and offer services.
I speak out of considerable experience, having been a pastor for 50 years. I have also served on the staff of a non-profit agency serving the needs of severely emotionally disturbed teenagers, many of them abused. I understand first hand the need for partnership to advocate on behalf of those who have little or no voice in the halls of government.

I urge your support of this bill and I thank Assemblyman Conklin for bringing it forward.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Is there anyone who is opposed to A.B. 299? Anybody neutral? [There were none.] We will close the public hearing on A.B. 299.

Assembly Bill 258: Revises provisions relating to the division, exchange or transfer of certain agricultural lands. (BDR 22-701)

Assemblyman John Carpenter, Assembly District No. 33:
I am here today to present Assembly Bill 258. This bill clarifies that divisions, exchanges, and transfers of lands for agricultural purposes are exempt from the provisions in existing law governing planning and zoning, including any requirements pertaining to the adjustment of boundary lines for filing a parcel map or record of survey, if each parcel results from the division, exchange, or transfer of agricultural lands. I have Walt Leberski with me who asked me to bring this bill forward. He will explain the necessity of this bill. I also have Bruce Arkell who is a prominent land surveyor, and he has a conceptual amendment (Exhibit D), which I agree with, and believe will help clarify A.B. 258.

Walter Leberski, Paralegal, Vaughn & Hull, Ltd.:
We are trying to clarify an existing exemption in the subdivision statute that concerns Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 278.320, Section 4. That present exemption exempts from the Statute subdivision of lands that are ten acres or more and are used for agricultural purposes. In the northern part of the State there are ranches and a need to trade lands between ranch owners. Even though they are more than ten acres, we have been required to do a record of survey. Following that procedure becomes expensive and discourages some of the trades that would be beneficial to maximize the efficiency of a ranch operation. For example, I passed out a homemade colored map (Exhibit E) that illustrates one trade that we got involved with. Two owners, the red and the blue were trading lands, and they wanted to trade the land between them. The red owner is up in the top of the map; that parcel came by a separate deed, so it did not require a survey. The blue owner down on the bottom; that was all he owned in the section, so supposedly it did not require a record of survey. Over
on the left hand side of that plaque where the blue owner was trading, he was breaking into a section; the purpose of that trade was to give the owner access to his other lands. He broke into a section for 160 acres that was described by aliquot part like the east half of the east half of the section. In order to do that they said that they would have to have a record of survey on that 160 acres, even though it was an aliquot part, which was relatively simple. The cost that was involved was $1,800 for the survey, $400 for the map, and it was involved in a ranch sale and additional interest on almost $1 million for a month. So the cost became quite a bit.

We are trying to clarify the ten-acre exemption for agricultural purposes, but it did not circumvent subdivision statutes that it could meet at least three requirements when doing an exchange for agricultural purposes. It should be ten acres or more in size and be described, by reference, to a standard subdivision used in the public land survey system. This is so the county assessor can identify the lands being traded and determine the acreage. If it goes any other way it would be described by the public land survey and require a record of survey. Some descriptions say, "I will convey to you everything I own on the eastside of the road." That would require a record of survey to be filed. It must qualify for agricultural use assessment either by itself or with other lands owned by the same individuals. A rancher may acquire a 40-acre parcel that did not produce $5,000 worth of income. All the assessors in the northern part of the State combine that 40 acres with the other lands the rancher owns to qualify for the $5,000 income for agricultural use assessment. The land must be accessible to both parties.

The purpose is to tighten up the present exemption for agricultural use assessment and agricultural exchanges. It clarifies exchanges, and I believe it will have positive results in some exchanges between ranches that have been pending for some time. It will help straighten out land patterns because it will reduce costs. I have one that is pending: they have been talking that the section corners are not recorded; it is located in an old survey section. We have a quote of $10,000 to do a record of survey, but we can describe it by aliquot parts. Mr. Arkell and the surveyors are concerned it would be a way to circumvent subdivision statute, and I would like to submit that amendment at this time.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Mr. Carpenter, I just want to understand the last amendment we received this morning. Does this section replace the rest of the bill? I believe the amendment was from you.
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**Assemblyman Carpenter:**  
I am not sure which one you are referring to. We want to disregard the amendment from a surveyor in Ely or White Pine County. I agree with the amendment Mr. Arkell is going to present; I hope you have the page that reads proposed amendment to A.B. 258.

**Bruce Arkell, Association of Land Surveyors:**  
I am not a surveyor, but I have spent a long time dealing and working with them. I am their representative today. We are in support of the proposed bill. We think it is a good bill that clarifies or tightens things up. What it did not do was close the loop. What happens if you lose your agricultural exemption? Right now under State law you keep the property in agricultural purposes because that is not defined anywhere. The proposed language defines when it has an agricultural exemption. This is good because it is checked and there is a mechanism to police that. We propose an amendment that adds to subsection 4 after line 16. It should be paragraph (e) because it is not part of the accessibility issue. It says that if you lose your agricultural exemption you are subject to all the provisions of the subdivision statutes, and that closes the circle. If you get the agricultural exemption, you can subdivide it, trade parcels, and all these other things as long as it remains in agricultural purpose. When the exemption is lost, you come into the subdivision statute. This is the major concern most surveyors have, both public and private.

**Assemblyman Settelmeyer:**  
Douglas County is unique. Elko County has the good fortune to deal with much larger parcel sizes. I know of a lot of ten-acre parcel people on Orchard Road, who create a nightmare for other agricultural producers. I wonder if ten acres are necessary, or can it be changed to 40 acres, because the parcel problems we are having with the ten acres have caused extreme problems to the rest of the system.

There is one area that used to be signified by three owners and referred to as Orchard Road which now represents 47 owners. Trying to deal with the irrigation system has become a nightmare. I worry that this might further process the parceling of that area and the smaller ranchettes. Can this amendment deal with remaining in agricultural ownership?

**Walter Leberski:**  
I think and hope that it does. That is not the intent, but we want to close that loop you are concerned with because it could happen in Elko County. I do not
know how many ten-acre parcels in Douglas County will produce $5,000 in agricultural income. They are trying to tighten that right now. If a person raises one colt on ten-acres and sells the colt for $7,500, that is considered agricultural income. They are trying to tighten that up so a lot of feed also has to be produced on that ten-acres.

Assemblyman Settelmeyer:
Unfortunately, we are getting some very creative bookkeepers. I know an individual who exchanges pasture on ten acres for 20 head of cattle for a very short period of time. He exchanges by giving his neighbor a bill for $7,000 who then charges him to go cut Christmas trees on his ten-acre parcel for $7,000. This creates a wash, but also creates a loophole. The intent of the law was correct, but I worry that this may cause a problem. I am wondering if 40 acres might be more desirable. Agriculture in Carson Valley does not rule anymore and we have so many smaller parcels and small agricultural concerns that it gets problematic.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:
I am not as familiar with the United States Land Public Survey System as I should be, but how do you create the legal definition of a ten-acre parcel?

Walter Leberski:
Sometimes fences are a little bit off the line and this is the reason for the ten acres. I would rather go down to 2.5 acres but then it gets more into your concern.

Second, Mr. Goicoechea, as to identifying ten-acres, if I go to the southeast quarter of a section, that is 160 acres, and if I go two more divisions to the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter, that is a ten-acre parcel.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:
This style of measurement is recognized under this public lands survey system? We are talking about the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter. As long as the parcel you were trading would not require a parcel map? I agree that it does place a hardship on the county assessors with the agricultural deferment, but this bill does not address that because we see people going to a Fallon sale and buying $5,000 worth of cattle, running them for 20 days, and then selling them for $5,000. They have a receipt for $5,000, so therefore, they are agricultural deferred. This does place a hardship, but has no relationship to this bill.
Walter Leberski:
Elko County has 5,000 parcels that are described that way. All Pilot Valley is also described that way.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:
Down to ten-acres or down to 2.5 acres?

Walter Leberski:
Some go down to 2.5 acres.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
I am trying to understand the definition of agriculture and how cows come into this. I understand they are part of the definition. I am looking for a little more layman’s terms that do not relate to cows. I just want to understand it on paper.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:
Walter’s [Leberski] map does a good job. Let us take section 10 and just forget that was section 10 and call it a quarter section. We would then take that 40-acre parcel and break it down into those ten-acre parcels that he is talking about. As long as you were falling on the property line of those ten parcels, it would be a valid exchange, and the only requirement is that it remain agricultural deferred. The agricultural deferred, and where the cows get into it, is that you have to be able to show that ten-acre parcel remains solely in agriculture. The only way a ten-acre parcel could be incorporated in this type of exchange would be if it were a stand-alone parcel, and maintained as agricultural deferred. You would not be able to have the ability to have that ten-acre parcel if it were sagebrush. It would be really difficult, as like Mr. Settelmeyer said, you were going to get creative with your bookkeeping because in order to be agricultural deferred, you have to be able to show $5,000 income from that property. It could never be a stand-alone ten acres unless you were creative and got some high dollar mare and said I raised a $5,000 colt out of her, and the guy that actually bought the colt did not give 50 cents for it, but that is nature trade in paper. That has nothing to do with this bill, as much as how much the assessors are going to tighten up their program to ensure that a piece of property is not being abused. I agree, as I look at the map, that under the United States Public Lands Survey you can technically go down to 2.5-acre parcels legally. Does that make sense when you look at one of these sections? It only pertains to agriculture, and that is the critical point we do not want to miss.
Chair Kirkpatrick:
I am clear now. Does anyone else have any questions?

Assemblyman Carpenter:
The amendment will clear up the situation that if it ceases to become agriculture, it has to meet all requirements of the subdivision statutes.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Do we have anyone else that would like to testify in favor of A.B. 258?

Joshua Wilson, Washoe County Assessor:
We do not have any issues with the bill, just a point of clarification. Once the parcel is described in accordance with the government parcel system that would then be recorded because any parcel changes we do in our office are based on recorded deeds. I think that is implicit in the bill, but I wanted to put that on record.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Is there anybody else that would like to speak in favor of or neutral on A.B. 258? Is there anyone that would like to speak against A.B. 258?

Kelly Kite, Commissioner, Board of County Commissioners, Douglas County, Nevada:
We do not have a problem with the intent or the purpose of this bill, but as Mr. Settelmeyer brought forward, it does create serious problems for Douglas County. It would violate the underlying zoning. We would be creating a ten-acre parcel that for the most part would be sitting on a 15-acre parcel. If this parcel were created, and sold somewhere down the line we would have a problem with somebody building a house on a ten-acre parcel with 15-acre zoning. It is a good way of getting around the zoning. A ten-acre ranch in Douglas County is an oxymoron, because there is no zoning for a ten-acre parcel. This bill would create those parcels.

The biggest problem with doing that in getting back to problems with maintaining an irrigation system that served us well for over 100 years. This would have to go before the ditch committee for approval. A ten-acre parcel does not always work with our irrigation system.

People who come in and buy a ten-acre parcel do not understand water rights. They think that if water is going behind a house they can plug into it for
irrigation. That cannot be done, and I do not know if Douglas County is alone with this problem. This is not a problem with the range land, but in Carson Valley where everything is dependent on irrigation, we are setting up a plan to destroy irrigation in the Carson Valley. We could live with 40-acres because that can be sold and divided to fit with zoning laws. Forty acres is easier but is not a perfect answer. It is better than trying to maintain and operate an irrigation system that the Carson Valley has to have. It is our life line. Irrigation not only keeps agriculture going but is our flood control system. Again, we do not disagree with the intent and the purpose of this bill; it is the unintended consequences that come further down the road. We could live with a 40-acre amendment.

Daniel Holler, Douglas County Manager:
The conceptual idea of the bill to help agriculture be more productive is something we strongly support. How do we make some of our ranchers more effective and more efficient in their operations? The concern is that the bill may have the opposite impact if you start carving up and making legal nonconforming ten-acre subdivisions.

I know some ranchers in Douglas County who would love to have the capability to carve their land into the ten-acre parcels under the idea that it would be more efficient for agriculture. We would create legal nonconforming parcels in the future. We will have a fire sale on ten-acre lots. As we run into those problems, it will impact our ability to deal with any type of public review of that process. The amendment does help. It says you have to go through the process after the fact, but if you already have legal nonconforming lots, there is a question whether you could revert those back to a 19 or 40 acre parcels. I do not think we would have the capability under the current legislation to revert back if it was not used for agriculture anymore, and then have them go through the whole subdivision process that may require street improvements, that require access improvements, that require other improvements, such as water, sewer or something of that nature. That is a concern. When we use aliquot parts of land with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), they use a process that ties everything to range and section numbers. This works well to get property described, so this is not a big issue or concern. The 40-acre parcel works much better on our current land use zoning aspects. Our representative from the District Attorney’s Office can walk through some of the challenges we have with land use, master planning, and land use zoning. We would be glad to work through some of these issues with Mr. Carpenter, if it is the Committee's wish and desire to move this forward. The intent to make ranching more effective and more affordable is laudable, and we would love to see that happen, but the unintended consequence may be just the opposite.
Robert Morris, Chief Deputy, Douglas County District Attorney’s Office:
I would like to talk about the unintended consequences that Mr. Kite addressed. The primary concern we have is there is no limitation on residential use in this bill. Douglas County has passed an ordinance that prohibits the construction of a single-family dwelling on any agricultural parcel created under this section. The proposed amendment deals with that. If you lose the agricultural assessment you would be subject to NRS 278.320, but the problem is there is already a ten-acre lot that has been legally created for a specific purpose. As Mr. Kite pointed out, most of our Agricultural 19 are 20 acre lot parcels. There would be a conflict between what the agricultural parcel map did and what we allow under zoning.

If you came in through NRS 278.320, you could ask for only a 20 acre parcel. This is one concern we have. We have dealt with it on a local basis by putting in a limitation of no single-family dwellings on agricultural parcels. If it were a larger parcel, say 40 acres, or 20 acres, it would be more consistent with the zoning, and would not create this conflict.

The agricultural assessment, under Chapter 361A of NRS, requires independent verification by the Department of Taxation or the Assessor’s Office. As written, there is no verification required. If the status under NRS 361A is lost it would be disqualified from the agricultural deferment. If you have legally created the parcel, what happens to the map if the parcel no longer qualifies for the agricultural deferment? This is one of the consequences. Tying the parcel to the agricultural assessment is a good idea because then you would have agricultural parcels. I am concerned with the loose ends in the bill; what happens if you are disqualified?

One other problem I see is access to these parcels. Under NRS 278 there is a requirement to provide easements to all the parcels. That seems to be a good idea, and this does cover some of that. Then a land owner divides his parcel into ten-acre lots with access through adjacent lands he owns, if he sells some of the lots, there is no guarantee that actual access would be given to that lot. The idea of requiring an easement to the lot would be a good idea, and covers most of them, but there is a small loophole by saying, "owned by the same person."

Douglas County has a Water Conveyance Committee that looks at development and irrigation and how they are affected. That is a prerogative we have under NRS 278.320. So, by exempting these maps from NRS 278.320, we are saying you do not have to go in front of this Committee to perpetuate the irrigation facilities.
Chair Kirkpatrick:
I have a couple of questions. What is the underlining zoning? The way I understand this, they would have to come back to the standards once it went away from the agricultural definition. What on your master plan is the underlining zoning for that? In Clark County, a park’s underlining zoning is open space or open land, or sometimes a golf course could be a residential zone, so what is the underlining zoning?

Daniel Holler:
The majority of our agricultural lands are zoned Agricultural 19, meaning the smallest minimum lot size is 19 acres. If it is BLM land, we have a 40-acre minimum if it ever converts. It has to start at 40 acres and work itself down. Our land use plan calls out the 19s and the zonings are there for that as well. A ten-acre parcel would currently drop below that minimum, and I do not know how you would require someone to go back up to a 19 if it was no longer used for agricultural use. We have had that problem in the past.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
What I understood of this is they are asking to do this temporarily while it is deferred to the agricultural. It says it goes back, and they have to start all over, so where does residential fall in? It is pretty clear that they have to go back through the process.

Robert Morris:
If you have 100-acre parcel and you divide it into ten-acre parcels and decide to sell one of those parcels, or to transfer the parcel, then somebody would have a ten-acre parcel. It would not comply with the underlining zoning. In Douglas County, we have a lot of mini ranchettes. The problem is you have possibly created a ten-acre parcel. If you sell one of those ten-acre parcels for agricultural purposes, what use is that if they do not have access to it? How do you go back and tell them now you have to do a subdivision map, but you are allowed only 19-acre parcels. How do you rectify the ten-acre parcels with the 19 minimum requirement?

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Would it not be consistent with the existing size parcel? Zoning says that you cannot build a convenience-commercial business on a parcel that is less than the amount of acres the area is zoned for, so would it not go back to where you had to get the 19 acres or you could not do anything with it? This is what I do not understand.
Kelly Kite:
You are right, but we have not gone far enough. You grew turnips on ten-acres to get your agricultural exemption. You decide you do not want to grow turnips anymore, but you cannot build a house because the underlining zoning is 19 acres. You bought a ten-acre parcel and we are denying you the right to build a house on your ten-acre parcel. To build, you will have to buy an adjacent ten acres. There is no way for you to get to your ten-acres or to the 15-acres that is the underlining zoning. We do this because we do not want 5, 10, 20, or 1,000 acres of ranch because the ranch can no longer be watered because the irrigation ditches go through your ten-acres, the other guy’s two acres, or five acres. We have to maintain that system. Then you are down to spot zoning, which any planner does not want you to do. There are a lot of ramifications to going less than the underling zoning.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
I look to local officials just to say no. Just say no, you cannot do it. I think it is no different from an individual agricultural or commercial person who knows what he is getting into.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:
We are losing sight of the fact that it says exchange or transfer of lands for agricultural purposes. I am sure that in Douglas County there are a number of parcels that by the legal description are only ten-acres of a corner, but it is attached to another five or six hundred acres. I believe that is the intent of this bill. Maybe it requires that you get down to a ten-acre parcel to realign that fence line or make that property square. Again, we are talking about exchange or transfer of lands for agricultural purposes. The point I have is if I have 500-acres there, the only way I can square it up is to end up with a couple of ten-acre parcels. For me to have the ability to take the ten-acre parcel off and sell it, I would have to do a parcel map in any jurisdiction because again, I am going to carve a piece of the whole and create the ten-acre parcel. In Douglas County’s case it would not work because their zoning requirements say that it has to be 20 acres. I am assuming all across Douglas County you have parcels that are less than 20 acres out of the legal definition if we are down to the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter. You have got to have those parcels in place. My understanding of the bill is we are talking about agricultural lands that are being traded. If that is not correct, I want it amended. The one thing you do not want is the ability for someone to go out and create two ten-acre parcels out of the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter, and so on, and then separate them and sell them individually. I would
have a problem with the bill at that point because that is de facto parceling. I think exchange or transfer of lands for agricultural purposes covers that by saying you can do this only if you are in fact going to take this trade and incorporate it back into the whole. Maybe we need language that clarifies that. Mr. Leberski, you do agree that this is the concept of this bill? We are not trying to create stand-alone ten-acre parcels. You have got to have something you are adding it to or else it will not work.

**Assemblywoman Parnell:**
Is there a time limit that it has to stay agricultural until it can be sold again? What makes me nervous is that you buy it for that purpose, and then the purpose changes. What is the process to legalize the change of purpose?

**Daniel Holler:**
The bill does not address that. The purpose could change the following day. At least it does not appear to have any type of time frame on it. If it created a legal parcel then it could be handled accordingly. If it cut off a portion to align something to do a boundary line adjustment, then you would be into the zoning debate of what do I do with this parcel that is a legal nonconforming parcel. We are saying you cannot do anything on it. I think we will lose that battle later.

**Chair Kirkpatrick:**
I am going to go to Mr. McKenna to clarify a few things.

**Scott McKenna, Committee Counsel:**
I would clarify as I understood the intent of the bill, when I spoke with Mr. Leberski. The idea was that if the agricultural use would not be continuing, the exemption from the provisions of Chapter 278 of NRS would no longer apply. That could be tightened up and made clearer, and that was the intent.

**Assemblyman Settelmeyer:**
I have seen situations where the adjusted lot lines created a quarter acre difference, but they wanted to go with the actual law of where the property line was compared to where the fence was. We wanted to go with the customary use, the new owner says no, I really want to go to the legal use but also allow you to use it. That is where these discussions come with new owners that want to do it differently from the old owners. The only reason I went to 40 acres was to use the concept of trying to preserve what is occurring in Douglas County. My question is, could this be done, allowing almost infinite acreage and letting it go down to whatever acreage you want as long as it still has to be consistent with the existing zoning of the municipality? I am willing
to let it go to zero acres, to .1 acres or whatever you want, as long as it still has to be consistent with the existing municipal zoning.

Robert Morris:
I think that would work, and maybe some of the confusion I had was I thought you would be allowed to transfer lots because in a boundary line adjustment, you are saying, "Here is a lot and we are moving it to the other owner." So there really is a transfer, and if this said for "exchange only" instead of "transfer," or if it was limited to boundary line adjustments for agricultural assessed parcels that would be a good idea. If it is limited to that small area, the concern I had was somebody changing their whole ranch into ten-acre parcels.

Assemblyman Settelmeyer:
I understand your concern, but what I am saying is even if not just for lot line adjustments. You could do transferences, but they have to be consistent with the existing zoning and municipality. Elko does not have the zoning problem we do in Douglas County. To me it was a concept to compromise, but again, it is up to the bill maker if he is willing to entertain those types of concepts. The bill could address other issues if we wanted to leave it at ten-acres, but it has to stay consistent. I will give you a example. If my neighbor comes and says, "I want to go back to the real line rather than the fence line," and it comes to whatever the acreage is, I still have 40 acres of land, and he still has 40 acres of land, and it is allowed under municipal zoning to exchange 2.5 acres, so who still cares? It does not require doing a $40,000 appraisal.

Robert Morris:
I agree with that. I think that is the sensible thing behind the bill. Our concern is the creation of nonconforming parcels. If you require it to be consistent with zoning that would eliminate that problem.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Is there anyone that would like to speak against A.B. 258? [There were none.] Mr. Carpenter, do you have any final comments or clarifications that you would like to put on the record?

Assemblyman Carpenter:
We would be willing to work with anyone who would like to make this workable because this is first that I have heard of Douglas County’s objection. We would be willing to work with them to come up with a bill that fits everyone’s requirements.
Walter Leberski:
Ten acres were the smallest aliquot part that we could use for a description that I thought would be acceptable. A lot of these trades are between ranches. In listening to Douglas County, we have the same problems in Lamoille Valley in Elko County on irrigation ditches, but they do parcel maps. They take care of it with zoning requirements. We have some lands that are zoned for no less than 40 acres. I think some of that could be taken care of by county zoning.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
With that being said, if you will work with the opponents of the bill, we can address all the issues. The sooner you can get back to me, the sooner we can go ahead with a work session.

Assemblyman Carpenter:
Maybe we could borrow your legal person when we have this conference so he can put this into legalese so it would satisfy the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

[Submitted letters in support of A.B. 258 (Exhibit F).]

Chair Kirkpatrick:
We will close the hearing on A.B. 258 and move on with Assembly Bill 291.

Assembly Bill 291: Revises provisions governing the use of money deposited in a local governmental fund established to stabilize the operation of the local government and mitigate the effects of natural disasters. (BDR 31-189)

Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea, Assembly District No. 35:
First, I want to apologize for giving you a bill that looks like this (Exhibit G). We missed it badly when it came out of drafting. The original text was for counties, and A.B. 291 is only for school districts. You will hear testimony from superintendents of schools and fiscal officers, as well as their school board members. There is a letter from Paul Johnson, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the White Pine County School District in support of the bill. You will also see in the handouts (Exhibit H) from Lander County School District, and Storey County School District. They have all endorsed this concept. The bill deals with the smaller school districts under 15,000 in county population. Most of these are net proceed mine counties, and we get some big swings in net proceeds.

Anytime you get a million dollar revenue swing in a small county, it impacts that county’s school district. The only real change is the existing statute on when and what the fund can be used for, other than the population cap.
*Nevada Revised Statutes* allows you to take a percentage of the net proceeds appropriation and establish a county fund for mitigation. That fund, in this case, would be a school district fund. If you have a two-year decline in your revenues from the net proceeds, you could access the funds you have created. If a mine in your district opens, it will impact a school district because it will have to have more classrooms and teachers. If a mine closes in your district, there would be a decline in revenues, so you could access the stabilization fund.

The new language we have put in is if you have a 20 percent reduction from the previous year’s revenues you could also access the fund.

You will hear what happens in a rural county when you have a $1.5 million shortfall in projected revenues. If this happens, the only alternative is to lay staff off. We have had as many as 15 teachers "hit the road" in these rural counties because the money was not there. Staff is the only place to cut when the money is not there. The last segment of this bill would be to retire bonds or other outstanding obligations [debt] that the school district had acquired. If they have a shortfall, and they are not able to meet those payments, we think they should be able to use this stabilization fund to meet those needs. Typically, when we have a budget shortfall, we have no other place to cut but in staff, and it is a real problem in the rural communities.

**Lisa Jones, Finance Officer, Eureka School District:**
I would like to share an experience our district had with the existing Revenue Stabilization Fund. Please refer to the AV Revenue Sheet *(Exhibit I).* This is a picture of the Eureka School District’s ad valorem and net proceeds revenue combined. You might notice the line on the chart is not a flat line, it spikes and it surges, and we have some exciting areas where it nears the top of the chart, and some less exciting areas where it dips. The history of the school district and the Revenue Stabilization Fund during the years when our ad valorem revenue was primarily from the mine operators was that our revenue was at its highest. When we are doing well, it occurred to us that it would be a good idea to take advantage of the Revenue Stabilization Fund.

We made a contribution equal to the amount of the expenditures of the prior fiscal year. We made that contribution, and the money stayed in the fund for several years. However, if you refer to the chart again, you will see that we started on the downward slope in our revenue string.

I will discuss the idiosyncrasies of our district since we are the only district in the State of Nevada that does not typically receive Distributed School Account funding until we get down to the lowest in 2003. In order to keep our district functioning on our own local revenue, we decided to take advantage of the
Revenue Stabilization Fund where we had saved some money. However, the language in the statute prohibited us from doing so. We had saved our money, but we could not access it when we needed to. The language in the statute says the decline in revenue must be unanticipated based on the forecasting of the Department of Taxation providing us with revenue numbers. Our revenue loss was never unanticipated. It was always anticipated based on the primary and the final revenue projections. This thwarted our ability to use our own money we had reserved in the fund. It was quite difficult and took some legal advice for us to eventually be able to use the money.

I do not believe the intention was to make it difficult to use the fund when the language was written for the original statute. I think you would like to see school districts be proactive and prepare for their own futures, and if they have additional funds, set those aside for situations when their revenue is not consistent. Due to our experience, I would encourage the consideration of the change in the language in the amendment so that there is more ability for school districts to access what we call, "the rainy-day fund."

Bob Burnham, Eureka County School Board:
My wife was the school board president when our district bottomed out in 2003. I remember her coming home on more than one occasion with tears in her eyes because the district was parting with one third of the high school teaching staff.

The point is, this did not have to happen. If we had more flexibility in conserving revenues, we could have retained the bulk of those people. We could have buffered the effects of huge changes in our revenue stream. Any prudent, farsighted parent or competent business manager will try to prepare themselves for lean times, particularly when they have a little bit of excess in good times. Yet, Nevada State law precludes small school administrations from preparing for those kinds of consequences.

Now we can be the kind of prudent, conscientious public servants who prepare our small school districts for these kinds of inevitable changes that occur in revenues, particularly in counties where mining is the bulk of the school revenue, but we need your help to do that.

Ben Zunino, Superintendent, Eureka County School District:
No Child Left Behind requires certain teachers to have certain levels and certain competencies. When we lose those, as you can see, we have our big school districts like Clark County who cannot find 400 teachers. When we lose teachers in rural counties, we lose them forever. The law requires us to have competent teachers at all levels, and one of the things that it recognizes is the
stability of staff. When you have stable staff you can begin to build on the quality of education you give the children. That is critically important. I have been an administrator for over 20 years and in education over 35 years. One of the things I can assure you is the stability of staff, and the development of staff over time can have a tremendous impact on children.

When you lose that staff, you lose that ability and have to begin again. In 2001, we lost six teachers in Eureka. They have to look at their stability and their families as well.

Our ad valorem tax went down from $500 million to $300 million with the stroke of a pen. It was forecast as Mrs. Jones said, so the use of this money was not unanticipated. If you look at that chart, it is very volatile, up and down, up and down, virtually every year.

Mr. Jordan Curtis from Lander County could not be here, so he asked me to present this to you. I am going to summarize what he has given you. Lander County has a current shortfall of $1.3 million. In their reserve fund they have $624,000, which would be about .5 percent of that. They are going to lose about 11 positions. It puts youngsters further at risk of completing the high school proficiency requirements. Their revenue this year is going to be a deficit. They will be going from $1.4 million in 2007 to $216,000 for the upcoming year. They are still planning to make further cuts along with the 11 positions. They could mitigate about 50 percent of it with that difference. If they could use this fund, they could save about two-thirds of the positions.

His recommendation is 10 percent instead of 20 percent because his $1.3 million shortfall is actually a little over 10 percent of his budget. Twenty percent is recommended by the other school superintendents that would benefit or be affected by this. Twenty percent is one fifth of your revenue. If you think about 20 percent, it is huge when you begin cutting that down to your disposable income and what you can actually spend on teachers, books, and things. As it is, we do not have big budgets. Some of the superintendents would like it to be zero. We realize there needs to be a threshold. Ten percent seems to be reasonable without cutting. Some of the schools have two certified teachers. What are you going to do when you have to cut those?

This amendment allows the Board of Trustees, and the elected officials of the county to manage their districts. I would like you to consider the language in this amendment and what the other superintendents have said. The boards of trustees are very competent if you allow them to manage their districts the best
that they can. Allow them to use the funds that have come from the county to manage the district and provide for the children in the district.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Does anyone have any questions? [There were none.] Is there anyone else that would like to speak in favor of A.B. 291?

Carole Vilardo, President, Nevada Taxpayers Association:
I think we started advocating or setting aside the net proceeds somewhere around 1995. In fact, we recommended that some of what the State gets should actually go into these funds. I would like to make a few comments on the bill. We absolutely support the concept. One of the issues that need to be modified is if these conditions are met, the first obligation should be to retire the debt. What has not been solved, and is actually not for this committee but Ways and Means, is that we should not be looking in the calculation of the Distributive School Account (DSA) to the net proceeds of mines being used as part of the property tax.

One of the biggest issues when the committee on local government finance has come before you is the fact that the property tax includes the net proceeds. When that goes down, you have a fund that is part of the operating budget that does not materialize.

You do not use net proceeds for ongoing operation. It is a road to disaster. I think this is what you are trying to solve here, but one of the first things that should be done, if this is to be used, is to take care of your general obligation debt and other debt. It does not thrill me that we would even use a savings for ongoing operation, but until there is another change where you can do something else, this is the good alternative. It needs to be done so we would encourage you to support the bill.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Are there any questions?

Assemblywoman Parnell:
In the language where it reads, "to retire outstanding bonds or other forms of debt," are we talking a lot of debt that could come under that umbrella term?

Assemblyman Goicoechea:
In the 2003 Session, we attempted to bring legislation very similar to this forward, and under the statute, you can technically vacate the account, so we did. A Crescent Valley School was not bonded and they could not meet their
payment. Upon advice from legal counsel, we vacated the account and used the money to recreate the account. That is a terrible way to have done it.

I am trying to get a letter from the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) that would allow Lander County to do the same thing with their $600,000, and that is to vacate the account. This way they can use the money but know that they must recreate the account the following year. This is a terrible way to have to do business.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Are there any other questions?

Carole Vilardo:
What you have is "pay as you go," which has to be repaid, so if you wanted to tighten that up, it could be GO debt or debt incurred because of...and it is really not debt, but pay as you go obligations.

Ben Zunino:
Eureka issued a bond to remodel and add on to our high school. The architect, right up to June, said $6,000,000 is plenty of money to remodel your high school. When the bids came in, the lowest bid was $7,075,000 just for the construction. This did not include the architects, the testing, or any of that, so we had to go out and borrow $2 million to make that up. This is the kind of thing we do not have any control over. Once we bonded, we had to go with the lowest bid. Being in rural America, everything is a little bit more.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Does anyone else have anything?

Assemblyman Goicoechea:
If you look at White Pine School District (page 6 of Exhibit H), it really emphasizes what Carole [Vilardo] was talking about. One third of that ad valorem tax base is net proceeds, and this is a county in severe economic hardship. The mine could close its doors tomorrow, and they would lose one-third of their revenue. How do you run a county or a school district when you are faced with that? Mines do open and close.

Ben Zunino:
Our school district financing is largely dependent upon net proceeds. It is a huge portion of what we do, and I know you do not fund things on an ongoing basis on temporary money, and we do not either. Please allow the school districts to run their business.
Chair Kirkpatrick:
Is there anyone else that would like to speak in favor A.B. 291? Anybody who is neutral? Anybody that is opposed to A.B. 291? [There were none.] We will close the hearing on A.B. 291 and open the hearing on Assembly Joint Resolution 7.

Assembly Joint Resolution 7: Urges the Secretary of the Interior to fully fund the interagency airtanker base programs for wildland fire suppression in Minden and Stead. (BDR R-290)

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Assembly District No. 40:
Assembly Joint Resolution 7, addresses the issue of the fires that we have in the northern part of the State. This is a very serious issue. As you can see from who signed onto the resolution, I tried to swing from Mr. Settelmeyer's neighborhood up north and across to the northeastern section of the State. This urges the Secretary of the Interior to fully fund the Interagency Airtankers Base Programs for wildland fire suppression in Minden and Stead.

Yesterday, it was brought to my attention that we also have an airtanker base in Battle Mountain, so before we have any conversation, I would like to offer a friendly amendment to include the airtanker base program in Battle Mountain. As you will hear, especially last summer when the northeastern part of our State was ravaged by fire, Battle Mountain would have been the nearest base to fight the fires up there. In July of 2006, Nevada ranked first in the nation in the amount of wildland acreage burned by wildfire in the United States. Last June we had 16 fires going in the northern part of the State at the same time. We also have to remember that the federal government owns and manages 87 percent of the land in Nevada, making it that much more important that we have the federal support needed for our airtankers.

This sends a letter to Congress urging that they recognize the incredible importance of having a quick response by airtankers during a fire. One of the most frightening things that I have seen living in Carson City for 31 years was the Waterfall Fire a couple of years ago. About the third or fourth day of that fire we looked up at the mountains toward Tahoe and saw the fire just about to crest into the Tahoe Basin. The thought of that for any of us should be paralyzing. That is just another issue to be aware of when we talk about fire and this part of the area.
Kelly Kite, Commissioner, Board of County Commissioners, Douglas County, Nevada:
In the last ten years there have been three fires that have come very close to capping the ridge into the Tahoe Basin. If that happens, we lose hundreds of houses, and in 150 years we might get somebody that might want to come back to northern Nevada to Lake Tahoe. Thirty minutes can make a huge difference in a fire. We were very lucky four years ago with the Gondola Fire coming out of Lake Tahoe. It was accessible, and we had Douglas County and every other fire department in northern Nevada up there to fight this fire. The fortunate part was that they could get to it. There is so much up there that you cannot get trucks, fire equipment, or fire personnel to. The only way you can fight it is with the tanker system.

If you have seen a fire take off in northern Nevada or in Nevada at all, 30 minutes is a huge amount of time, so we need those bases where they are, in Stead, Minden and Battle Mountain. It is imperative that we send this resolution to Washington, and do everything we can to save Nevada, and keep those fire bases where they are.

Daniel Holler, Douglas County Manager:
We wanted to bring this forward for a couple of reasons. The need for it is evident. During the last funding cycle with the federal budget, we were meeting with the local Bureau of Land Management (BLM) officers who were told to cut their budget by a certain percentage. They were looking for $100,000 or $200,000 in savings, and one way to do that is to close one of the tanker bases. They had approached us in Minden to do that. We pushed extremely hard not to have that done. They ended up doing some other managing of their budget so they would not close the tanker base. The concept at the time was that we will shut down Minden and just operate out of Stead, and the opposite of that was to close Stead and operate out of Minden. That created a grave concern for us, again, because of the timing issues we have along the Pine Nut Range as well as in the Tahoe Basin.

We sat in our offices watching the lightning strike and saw the fire start up, and within ten minutes we saw a tanker hit that fire. Meanwhile, we were marshalling ground crews to check it out, but if we did not have that quick response, instead of a two to five acre fire, you would have a several hundred or thousand-acre fire. Once a fire starts, you are not going to stop it that easily.

The other thing we need is for home and life protection. In the Autumn Hills Fire ten years ago, we lost a couple of homes when the fire went into houses in the area. But, we saved a number of other homes because we were able to drop slurry on them to keep them from catching fire. We have seen first hand
the need for these facilities and are very concerned the federal government will not fund them at their correct level. Budget cuts will result in short-term money savings but long term disasters. Considering the federal agencies' expenditures on fire suppression nationally, suppressing fire in Nevada should be an extremely high priority in terms of life, property, and money.

Chair Kirkpatrick:
Is there anybody who has any questions? Those of you that would like to testify in support of A.J.R. 7 go ahead and get started.

Pete Anderson, State Forester Fire Warden, Division of Forestry:
We too support A.J.R. 7. It is very important to all of us in the wildfire suppression business that we maintain our existing tanker bases across the State. When we get multiple starts across our northern tier, or even down south, every one of those bases is critical to the overall operation. We encourage the letter to clearly state to our federal cooperators the necessity of having all of our tanker bases funded and fully operational.

Michael Brown, Fire Chief, North Lake Tahoe Fire District, Incline Village, Nevada:
I am representing my jurisdiction, as well as the regional chiefs from the Tahoe Basin. Whatever you can do to support our bases, we would be very appreciative. Tahoe is quite the place, as well as the State of Nevada, and we need these resources.

Stacey Giomi, Fire Chief, Emergency Management Director, Carson City Fire Department, Carson City, Nevada:
I support everything that has been said. Behind the scenes we have worked at our level to try to work through our local fire managers of those federal agencies to save these bases. There is only so much that we and they can do when they begin discussing Washington budgets, but the reality is $100,000 in a fire fighting budget is a drop of water in a bucket. We are very lucky to have three bases in Nevada that are close. They are vital to us. It has reached the point where the efforts we have undertaken have not gotten as far as we would have liked. Your support and ultimately the State support through our federal representatives would be much appreciated.

Coe Swobe, Private Citizen:
I am a member of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Board, but I am not officially representing them. I distributed a copy of the resolution that I sponsored (Exhibit J) in the TRPA, dated February 23, 2005. Also, I had a picture of the Waterfall Fire. Until we get the forest fuels removed from the floor of the basin, it is important that we have this quick response. It was the
airtankers that saved Lake Tahoe when it was cresting, plus the fact that we had some fuel reduction in that area, so I would urge your support. I am going back to Washington [D.C.] concerning some Tahoe matters, and I will bring this to the attention of Senator Ensign and Senator Reid.

**Chair Kirkpatrick:**

Is there anybody that would like to speak against A.J.R. 7? [There were none.] Anyone that is neutral on A.J.R. 7? [There were none.] We will close the hearing on A.J.R. 7. We do have three BDRs that we need to get introduced.

**BDR 42-375**—Clarifies applicability of regulations of the State Fire Marshal concerning building codes. (Later introduced as Assembly Bill 529.)

ASSEMBLYMAN BEERS MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 42-375.

ASSEMBLYMAN SETTELMEYER SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

* * * * *

**BDR 20-771**— Clarifies provisions governing the exemption of certain uses of time-share units from taxes on transient lodging. (Later introduced as Assembly Bill 528.)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PIERCE MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 20-771.

ASSEMBLYMAN KIHUEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The last BDR we received this morning is from Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 11 of the 73rd Legislative Session. It was from the Affordable Housing Committee.

**BDR 32-143**— Revises provisions governing the planning for and funding of redevelopment and affordable housing. (Later introduced as Assembly Bill 527.)

ASSEMBLYMAN GOICOECHEA MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 32-143.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WOMACK SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Kirkpatrick:

Is there anything from the Committee? Just a reminder, Monday [March 26, 2007] we will be starting at 8:00 a.m. We have four water bills. Two have to do with northern Nevada, and two have to do with southern Nevada.

Meeting adjourned [at 10:51 a.m.]

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Cheryl Williams  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Marilyn K. Kirkpatrick, Chair

DATE: ________________________________
## EXHIBITS

**Committee Name:** Committee on Government Affairs  
**Date:** March 23, 2007  
**Time of Meeting:** 9:00 a.m.

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