

1st Slide

By way of introduction to the few of you that I haven't had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Lorinda Wichman, Commissioner for Nye County first elected in 2008 by the voters in District 1, which is everything north of Bell Vista Avenue in Pahrump and excluding the boroughs of Alaska, the largest Commissioners district in the U.S. Since 2009 I have been the Chairman of the BoCC, and the Vice Chair. Chairman of the Highway District and currently the Chairman of the Liquor & Licensing board. I was President of NACO in 2015 and currently I am the Vice Chair of NACO's Legislative Committee. In January of next year I will be the Senior Commissioner in Nye County. I am excited to be invited to appear before you with this presentation

Once a month I travel 86 miles, one way, to attend the board of commissioner's meeting. Due to the vast area and the population center located in the southernmost tip of Nye County the board holds two board meetings a month. The third Tuesday of each month I travel 240 miles one way to Pahrump. All services are duplicated; the County seat, centrally located and the population center in Pahrump.

Due to the size and the population distribution, Nye County remains the only county out of 3,069 counties nationwide that maintain two separate seats of government.

We have much to be proud of, Tonopah has the restored historic Mizpah Hotel, the Tonopah Mining Park, and the Central Nevada Museum. A ways N.E of Tonopah is the historic ghost town of Belmont. The County Seat prior to 1906 with a year round population of about 10 now. The Friends of the Belmont Courthouse have restored much of the building replacing the period replica windows, doors and roof. Future plans include a structural refurbishment of the interior and a room by room restoration. Tours are available during the summer months and by appointment the rest of the year. Make sure you are topped off with fuel, have a good spare tire and stacks to hold you through as the only business enterprise in town is Dirty Dick's Saloon, in operation since the late 1800s. Don't pass them up, it is much as it was when it first opened, you can enjoy a refreshment on the porch just as the first Sheriff of Nye County did.

2nd Slide

Less than 3% of 18,159 square miles is privately owned and generating Ad Velorum tax revenue to provide services to 100% of those that use Nye County.

Four of the ten guests in this list are excluded from PILT payments, since they have special reserve status. BLM retains the underlying management of NTTS and Nellis land although they have been removed from PILT calculations.

In the NSS's proposed expansion, by their own calculation, in the socioeconomic study for the draft environmental impact study, they calculated an annual loss of PILT to be \$682,000 to Nye County.

Before I continue I want you to know..... I am proud to live in a county that is full of veterans and patriotic residents. I am proud to host our training grounds for the Nation's Military. I am proud of our public lands, the wildlife reserves and the wilderness areas within our boundaries. I am proud of what Nye has to offer.

3rd Slide

Draft Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (DLEIS) for the NNSS expansion proposal published in the Federal Register/Vol. 82, Page 57974, on December 8, 2017.

The Congressionally-mandated Special Nevada Report (SNR SAIC 1991), mandated in the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1989, ascertained that without the NTTR Nye County's GRP would increase by 9%. The 2014 GRP was nearly \$1.6 billion (\$1,553,973,921). Applying the results from SNR (SAIC, 1991) analysis that reduces our potential GRP by about \$140 million annually. That

is a loss to the county budget of net proceeds of minerals, room tax, real and personal property taxes, fees from development on withdrawn land, federal permit fees, and rents, gas, liquor, gaming and consolidated taxes.

This doesn't include any of the cost of providing services.

4th Slide

Proposed expansion up to 105,000 acres removed from PILT calculations

5th Slide

Property owners in Nye County pay an average of \$90 per acre per year. PILT pays \$.36 per acre per year. A loss of \$89.64. 11,621,760 acres in 18,159 sq. miles. Less 348,653 privately owned, 1,964,482 reserved (or proposed) for military leaves 9,308,625 acres @ \$.36 per = \$3,351,105.

9,308,625 @ \$90. = \$837,776,250.

Unreasonable to assume that 100% could provide the same as private land, right? How about 50% = \$418,888,125

How about 25% = \$209,444,063. Still unreasonable to assume? How about 10% = \$83,777,625

Still too much to assume? 1% = \$8,377,763. Let's assume only ½ of 1% = \$4,188,882

Currently, PILT provides a little over \$3 mil of our general fund revenue. County services are provided to 100% of all public land users. On the right is a list of some of the services the County provides and Nye County provides duplicate services for each; Central and southern.

6th Slide

This information is from the Department of Interior's website. Do the calculations look funny to you? Clark County has 50 times the population of Nye County to generate revenue, and only half the public land as does Nye County and yet the PILT Payments are nearly the same. Both calculations are wrong, in my opinion. All public land counties, urban and rural, are entitled to PILT but the rural counties with small populations and vast amounts of public lands are penalized. We don't receive enough to cover the impacts and the services we are required, by law, to provide.

There are efforts before Congress to amend the procedures for calculating PILT payments. A colleague in Montana, Prairie County Commissioner Todd Devlin, has spent nearly 20 years trying to correct this

inequity. We are hoping in this upcoming session there will be a sponsor of his bill. Simply correcting the Interiors math will mean an additional \$10,000 a year to Nye County without changing the population factor.

7th Slide

Tax payers are protected from increases that exceed 3% annually BUT taxes can be reduced by an unlimited %. Legislation failed in 2017 to help us build in a safety net that would limit the reductions to 3% annually. The effort became a sound bite for a campaign touted as a tax hike, which it was not.

2008 General Fund revenue was \$35,122,677: 2017 General Fund revenue \$33,497,521. Still \$1.6 mill short of full recovery nine years later. The hard times have served to expose inefficiencies and even without a full recovery on April 25th Nye County has returned to a stable budget position and was released from fiscal watch by the CLGF

The privately owned hospital in Tonopah closed in 2015 and due to a reversionary clause the medical campus was returned to Nye County. I created a taxing district to help support the medical needs of northern Nye County. It took nearly a year to safely use the tax revenue. That year was spent solely in educating the elected DA on the methods I used to create the taxing district. And convincing the DA those methods were consistent with state law. Thanks to the Legislative Council Bureau and the Attorney General's office 11.5 months after taxation started the newly formed District was able to negotiate with Renown for services to provide a Telemedical clinic.

However, volunteer EMTs that once made 2 to 4 hour runs to the Tonopah ER were now forced to transport to Hawthorne, Bishop, Pahrump or Fallon. This increased any run to a minimum of 10 hours and many runs to as much as 14 hours before returning home. This has caused many volunteers to remove their names from the rotation. Smoky Valley had 20 EMTs on the roster in 2015 by early 2016 that roster was reduced to 7. Tonopah's roster did the same, resulting in several months with EMTs responding from Pahrump, Bishop, White Pine, Mineral, Churchill, and Lander Counties. Many off duty officers, here in Hawthorne, were enlisted to return the discharged patients to Tonopah. This has created a drain on our sister counties and neighboring states.

Our volunteers receive nothing for being on-call, if they have patient contact they receive \$35 to \$50 based on their level of training. The funding comes from the revenue received in ambulance billings. An enterprise fund. Medicare and Medicaid pay a fraction of the cost to provide the service, averaging about 10% on a billing. A recent new status of Underserved Community has given us a higher percentage of payment but it is too early to see exactly what that means to the bottom line.

8th Slide

Each year Nye County must expend funds to send a representative to Washington DC to beg for full funding of PILT. The effort takes hours of preparation and extends far beyond the annual trek to DC.

I have requested mitigations from NTTR and NAS totaling \$5 mil annually. I'm stuck in the *Go ask Mom, Go ask Dad* catch 22 between the local commanders and the Department of Defense. With this request Nye County would be able to actively entice medical providers to Central Nevada, structure a fully functioning Department of Emergency Management and pay the volunteers something more substantial for patient contact. With the taxes collected by the Hospital District we have been able to secure an

agreement with Renown and REMSA to provide some much needed services but we are unable to collect enough to insure the success of our EMT services.

Our 2017 attempt to build in a safety net to Ad Velorum tax losses that was touted as a tax hike was doomed before it was seriously considered. When future amendments to the Ad Velorum taxes come before you, reach out to NACO, Nevada Tax Payers Association, Jeremy Aguero at Applied Analysis or I'll help you if you will allow me. Nevada's tax structure is great, it has many carefully structured protections for all of us, but every plan has room for improvement. We simply wish to avoid another catastrophe like the one we have lived through.

Help us help you in providing services to our shared constituency. During sessions your jobs can be overwhelming. Reach out to me, I will bend over backwards to help you anytime.

9th Slide

This contact information is my private contact information as well as public, it will remain the same after my term expires. I term out in December of 2020 but I am not going anywhere. Nye County and Nevada are my home. I'll still do everything possible to help you with anything I can.

Thank you for this opportunity to showcase Nye County and our challenges, it has been an honor to appear before you. Madame Chair, thank you for the invitation.