

After watching the committee meeting this morning at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Calendar/A/>, I would like to place some comments into the minutes. I am a resident of Nye County and I recreate on our Nevada public lands commonly. I am concerned with the management direction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) presented by State Director Jon Raby concerning sustainably keeping public lands healthy and intact for future generations. My concerns are:

1. The utility-scale Gemini Solar Project will degrade and remove 7,000 acres of prime Mojave desert tortoise habitat, fragment genetic connectivity between Critical Habitat units, harm rare plants, and block public access to a beautiful valley next to the Muddy Mountains Wilderness Area. This valley is used for dispersed camping, Jeep trail exploration, and is popular with residents of Las Vegas to get out of the city and enjoy public lands. I would like to ask the legislature for laws that would help better alternatives such as rooftop solar, energy efficiency, Distributed Energy Resources, and increased access and implementation of Net Energy Metering programs in the state.
2. Fuel reductions projects include too many thousands of acres of pinyon-juniper woodland and sagebrush habitat removal on public lands. Pinyon pines and juniper trees provide scenic landscape views, shade while hiking, and abundant habitat for various birds such as pinyon jays, juniper titmice, black-throated gray warblers, Western bluebirds, and many others. These native forests also provide winter cover from storms for mule deer and elk. I am dismayed at the continual pinyon-juniper removal projects that are ramping up in Nevada on public lands, and especially at the large programmatic NEPA reviews that seem to be allowing increased categorical exclusions and less public participation.
3. Targeted grazing does not seem to have a public input component, and BLM could conceivably allow cattle and sheep grazing anywhere under this program. I would like to request that BLM undertake NEPA reviews for all such projects, and include the public.
4. I am concerned that the massive Great Basin Fuel Breaks Project will not be efficacious in stopping wildfires during high winds, when sparks and firebrands are blown horizontally, crossing any fuel breaks that are mowed or grazed. I am equally concerned that these fuel breaks will fragment open sagebrush-steppe regions where very old routes are counted as "roads" and turned into wide fuel breaks, and increased vegetation removal could open up areas to cheatgrass invasion.
5. Approximately 2,800 wild horses were gathered from BLM lands recently, but numbers of cattle and sheep on BLM allotments should be reduced as well in order to restore ranges to a healthy functioning state. I have seen heavily grazed deserts, meadows and grasslands on public lands in Nevada that have too many cattle yet wild horses are blamed for all the overgrazing.
6. State Director Raby indicated that the Nevada Test and Training Range proposed military expansion language will be included in the must-pass NDAA. Again I am very concerned at the loss of tens of thousands of acres of public lands in Nevada, both 18,000 acres of BLM land around Beatty where I live, and a huge portion of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. I also hope that the Fallon Naval Air Station proposed expansion into BLM lands will not move forward in a similar manner, taking yet more public lands and eliminating recreational access.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

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