



**NEVADA LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S INTERIM STUDY
CONCERNING THE FEASIBILITY STUDY OF LONG-RANGE MASS TRANSIT
WITHIN STATE AND TO URBAN AREAS OF
NEIGHBORING STATES**

(Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 [File No. 90, *Statutes of Nevada 2003*])

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The third meeting of the Legislative Commission's Interim Study Concerning the Feasibility Study of Long-Range Mass Transit within State and to Urban Areas of Neighboring States (Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 31 [File No. 90, *Statutes of Nevada 2003*]) was held on March 2, 2004, at 9:30 a.m., in Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4100 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" ([Exhibit A](#)) and other substantive exhibits, is available on the Nevada Legislature's Web site at www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/72nd2003/Interim. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Senator Joseph M. Neal Jr., Chairman
Senator Warren B. Hardy II
Senator Raymond D. Rawson
Senator Dina Titus
Assemblyman Kelvin D. Atkinson
Assemblyman Chad Christensen
Assemblyman Harry Mortenson
Assemblyman David R. Parks

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Mike McGinness
Assemblyman Rod R. Sherer

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Marjorie Paslov Thomas, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division
Brenda J. Erdoes, Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Mary Alice McGreevy, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Bonnie Borda Hoffecker, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division

OPENING REMARKS

On behalf of Chairman Neal, Senator Rawson welcomed the members and audience and outlined that the Committee would study the transportation needs of Nevada's rural communities. He informed the Committee and the public the next Committee meeting would be held at 9 a.m. April 13, 2004, in the Pinion Room of the

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 20, 2004, MEETING

The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

ASSEMBLYMAN PARKS MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S INTERIM STUDY CONCERNING THE FEASIBILITY STUDY OF LONG-RANGE MASS TRANSIT WITHIN STATE AND TO URBAN AREAS OF NEIGHBORING STATES (SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 31 [FILE NO. 90, *STATUTES OF NEVADA 2003*]) JANUARY 20, 2004, MEETING HELD IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR HARDY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PRESENTATION ON RURAL TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NEVADA

- Carl R. Dahlen, Director, Rural Community and Economic Development, Division of Economic Development, Nevada's Commission on Economic Development, provided an overview of five topics of consideration for the Committee. Please see [Exhibit B](#) for further information. The considerations are as follows:
 1. The current need for adequate mass transit in rural Nevada;
 2. The future needs of those rural areas near the urban centers;
 3. The issue of moving goods and materials as well as people (top priority);
 4. The use of air travel as a means of mass transit; and
 5. The potential for tourism when mass transit is in place.

PRESENTATION ON RURAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN NEVADA

- Keyth Durham, Chairman, State Advisory Committee on Transit, Nevada's Department of Transportation (NDOT), provided a synopsis of the State Advisory Committee on Transit and introduced Ms. Carol E. Dotson.
- Carol E. Dotson, Director, and Director of Planning, Lumos and Associates, provided and discussed a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation on the rural transportation programs in Nevada. Please see [Exhibit C](#) for further information.
- Sydnie Schlachta, Transportation Planner Analyst I, NDOT, explained that 5311 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding averaged \$750,000 during the past five years and currently is approximately \$858,000. Local governments must provide a 50 percent match of operating funds. Therefore, Nevada's rural communities are requesting assistance with 25 percent of the total matching funds.
- Steve Russell, Chairman, Southern Nevada Transit Coalition (SNTC), referenced the Microsoft PowerPoint presentation and advised that a \$3 million budget deficit almost caused a shutdown of public transit routes in Laughlin and Mesquite, Nevada. He explained how SNTC began operating public mass transportation in those communities at a savings of \$1.1 million annually with no loss of service.
- Chuck Ricker, Executive Director, Northern Nevada Transit Coalition (NNTC), explained that the NNTC, due to budget cuts, could only transport 5 percent of the previous 250,000 rides provided to the "transportation disadvantaged residents" (disabled, low income, and senior citizens) in rural Nevada. Mr. Ricker reported there have been drastic reductions in public transit systems in Elko and Ely, Nevada, and public transit has been eliminated in Lyon County, Wendover, and Winnemucca, Nevada.

- Ernie Maguire, General Manager, Churchill Area Regional Transportation (CART), provided a brief overview of the CART program. The CART program provides 2500 to 3000 rides per month or 35,000 per year. Those 35,000 rides provided per year represent persons needing transportation for the following reasons:
 - Education (3,600);
 - Employment (6,800);
 - Medical appointments (8,200);
 - Nutrition programs (senior citizens' meal program) (7,600);
 - Recreation (4000); and
 - Personal (4,800).
- Carolyn Gillis, Director, Care and Share, Mineral County, representing Douglas, Elko, Esmeralda, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Pershing, Storey, and White Pine Counties, explained within a year the Care and Share program has increased from approximately 1,500 to 1,800 passengers per month, and it is expected to reach the goal of 2,000 passengers per month. Every year the program has exceeded the previous year's passenger count. See [Exhibit C](#) for further information.

PRESENTATION ON ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION ALIGNMENTS AND THEIR ASSOCIATED COSTS

- Susan G. Martinovich, P.E., Deputy Director, NDOT, provided and discussed a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation on the long-range transportation alternatives, travel statistics, modes of transportation, construction costs per mode per mile, and sources for financing the construction. Please see [Exhibit D₁](#) for further information. In addition, Ms. Martinovich provided testimony on mode operating cost comparisons and definitions of modes established in S.C.R. 31. Please see [Exhibit D₂](#) for further information.

The following federal funds could be utilized for mass transit in Nevada:

Section 5309 - Capital Bus Program—The Capital Bus Program is authorized by 49 U.S.C. § 5309. The program provides grants to assist in financing capital projects that will benefit the State's transit systems in both urban and nonurbanized areas. There are three categories of projects: (1) bus and bus-related facilities; (2) modernization of fixed guideway systems; and, (3) construction of new fixed guideway systems and extensions. The Capital Bus Program is a discretionary program.

Section 5310 - The Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Formula Program—The Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Formula Program is authorized by 49 U.S.C. § 5310. The program makes funds available to private, nonprofit organizations and associations, and designated public entities for the purchase of capital equipment for use in transporting the elderly and persons with disabilities, where existing services are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate. Eligible capital items include buses, vans, vehicle rehabilitation, initial installation costs, vehicle procurement, testing, inspection, and acceptance costs, preventive maintenance, bus shelters, radio equipment, wheelchair lifts, lease of equipment when lease is more effective, and acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease, or other agreement. At present, no operating funds are available. The Section 5310 program is designed to supplement the FTA's other capital assistance programs by funding transportation projects for the elderly and persons with disabilities in urbanized, small urban, and rural areas.

Section 5311 - Rural and Nonurbanized Rural Public Transportation Program—The Rural and Nonurbanized Rural Public Transportation Program for public transportation is authorized by 49 U.S.C. § 5311. Section 5311 provides funds for capital and operating assistance to state agencies, local public bodies, nonprofit organizations, and operators of public transportation services. The goals of the program are to:

- (1) enhance the access of people in nonurbanized areas, especially elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged persons, to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services and recreation;
- (2) assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas;
- (3) encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all federal funds

used to provide passenger transportation in nonurbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services; (4) assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and (5) provide for the participation of private transportation providers in nonurbanized transportation.

PRESENTATION ON THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S (DOE) PROPOSED CALIENTE RAIL CORRIDOR AND THE POSSIBILITY OF OTHER COMMERCIAL USES OF THE RAIL LINE

- Gary J. Lanthrum, Director, Office of National Transportation, Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, DOE, provided and discussed a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation on the DOE's preference to utilize the Caliente, Nevada, corridor and rail as the transportation mode. Please see [Exhibit E](#) for further information. Mr. Lanthrum indicated a new railroad must be constructed within Nevada and that the infrastructure could be utilized by additional rail systems. He suggested the local benefit to Caliente would be approximately \$24 million per year.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

- Bill King, concerned citizen from Pahrump, Nevada, requested assistance from the Committee to provide transportation alternatives between Las Vegas and Pahrump. He indicated that reasonable fares and substantial connectivity would be necessary to create a successful mode of mass transit.

Chairman Neal requested that staff provide an inventory of the lands in Nevada that are available for development, which will encourage people to relocate to rural communities.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Borda Hoffecker
Senior Research Secretary

Marjorie Paslov Thomas
Senior Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Joseph M. Neal Jr., Chairman

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" for this meeting.

[Exhibit B](#) is a copy of the testimony of Carl R. Dahlen, Director, Rural Community and Economic Development, Division of Economic Development, Nevada's Commission on Economic Development.

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled "Small Urban & Rural Public Transportation Ridership in 2002," provided by Carol E. Dotson, Director, and Director of Planning, Lumos and Associates.

[Exhibit D₁](#) is a copy of Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled "Long Range Rural Transportation Alternatives," provided by Susan G. Martinovich, P.E., Deputy Director, Nevada's Department of Transportation.

[Exhibit D₂](#) is a copy of a document titled "Mode Operating Cost Comparison," provided by Susan G. Martinovich, P.E., Deputy Director, Nevada's Department of Transportation,

[Exhibit E](#) is a copy of a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled "National Transportation Update," provided by Gary J. Lanthrum, Director, Office of National Transportation, Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, United States Department of Energy.

This set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report" is supplied as an informational service. Exhibits in electronic format may not be complete. Copies of the complete exhibits, other materials distributed at the meeting, and the audio record are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library online at www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm or telephone: 775/684-6827.