

17 April 2024

Chair Harris and Interim Growth and Infrastructure,

My name is Olivia Tanager, and I am the new Director of the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter. I want to wish you all a happy Earth Month.

The Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter is the largest grassroots environmental group in the state of Nevada with 40,000 members. As we look toward the next legislative session, the top priority in our mind is the climate crisis. As you all know, Reno is the fastest warming city in the country, and Las Vegas is the second. Extreme heat already plagues Nevadans, myself included. I've lived through several horrible wildfires up here in Northern Nevada where my family couldn't afford an air filter. My husband has had to work in temperatures over 100 degrees. If any state is obligated to address the climate crisis, it is Nevada.

Transportation emissions remain the highest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in the state. We cannot replace every single combustion engine vehicle with an electric one. There's not a single study I've seen that suggests that will effectively mitigate transit emissions. We must be expanding our mass transit systems, electrifying our public transportation systems with long range batteries, and making our transportation systems more efficient for riders and more enticing to ride. It is mission critical for emission reduction in Nevada.

And, outside of climate considerations, expanding our public transportation is an economic justice issue. As Senator Harris referenced earlier, Nevada is the second most expensive state to own a car. My own family is a single car household because of the expense. Public transportation should be accessible for all Nevadans. Up in Reno, when our car broke down a few years ago, before we were able to afford a bike, it was faster for my husband to walk for an hour and a half to work each way than it was for him to take the bus.

So, this interim, I implore you all to look into what expanding transit access at the state looks like. There is federal money out there as you all know. We have to invest more in our transit systems if we want to give our kids a shot at a livable planet and a Nevada where folks of all income levels are able to be mobile in order to get groceries, go to work, etc.

Thanks to you all for facilitating this conversation and for the work you do as caretakers of this beautiful state.

Sincerely,

Olivia Tanager