

April 6, 2017

Honorable Heidi Swank  
Nevada Assembly District 16  
Chair, Nevada Assembly Natural Resources, Agriculture and Mining Committee  
State of Nevada Assembly  
401 South Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701

**Re: Assembly Joint Resolution 13**

Dear Chair Swank:

I am writing to advocate for Assembly Joint Resolution 13, which expresses support of the designation of Basin and Range National Monument. Over the last twenty years I have been working on the protection of Michael Heizer's *City*, an unparalleled work of art that is now a part the monument and is inextricably linked to the uniquely American Western landscape that surrounds it. The West is quintessentially defined not just by the Rockies, but also by the rhythmic repetition of tall north-south mountains defining horizontal basins through most of the state of Nevada.

It's no wonder that American artist Michael Heizer, whose family included geologists who lived in Nevada, chose the quiet and empty mountain-surrounded basins of Garden and Coal Valleys to site his largest sculpture, *City*, a monumental, mile-and-a-half-long collection of mounds and abstract forms in earth, rock, and concrete. Heizer has been at work nearly fifty years on this masterpiece of American art, which is intended to be visited by walking among meaningful and beautiful forms, like that of an ancient city, or even the ceremony of buildings around malls and parks in modern times.

Size and scale are important aspects of our aesthetic experience in art and in nature. Within its perimeter, Heizer's great sculpture seems massive as experienced from our human scale; yet standing at the entrance to Garden Valley, his low earthen "city" is nearly invisible in the context of the incalculable distances across the horizontal desert to the bases of the imposing mountains.

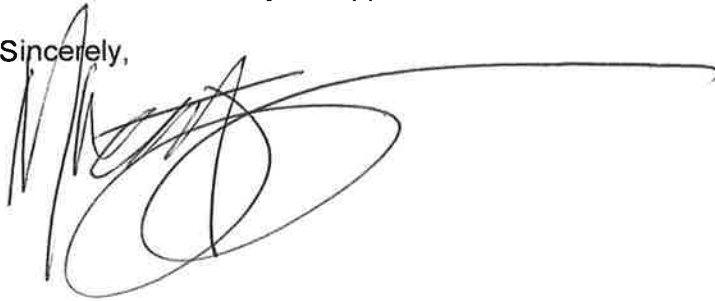
In this isolated Nevada desert, Heizer was able to make art of the land. Nearly the entire sculpture is made of the land, so that built mounds are balanced by depressions, or "negative forms," that offer unusual and constantly shifting visual experience. Subtly colored ancient river rocks, moved to Nevada from far off places during the Ice Age, were mined to cover mounds of compacted earth, and made into concrete for linear curbs that catch light and shadow, and will stabilize the sculptural forms for centuries if not millennia, for future generations to have a glimpse into our civilization through Heizer's powerful artistic expression.

Unfortunately, the specific area around Heizer's internationally significant artwork has been threatened time after time by ill-conceived and poorly researched proposals, insensitive to the national treasure they threatened. Understandably, until now, while Heizer was constructing his masterwork, its presence was less known. Now, as the sculpture is nearly completed, and Heizer is well recognized for his half-century of major artworks in the outdoors and in museums around the world, it is imperative that we continue to protect this extremely important cultural and natural resource.

The unmarred public lands of Nevada's Basin and Range region provide the perfect frame for Heizer's composition—scenic mountains and unspoiled valleys that appear to change dramatically as the sun and moon traverse the sky. Conservationists have long sought to safeguard the area's rich archeological sites, beautiful open expanses and important wildlife habitat through a National Monument designation that has finally happened.

Thank you for introducing Assembly Joint Resolution 13. I support the measure and encourage both the Assembly Natural Resources, Agriculture and Mining Committee and the full Assembly to support it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.