

## Mineral adopts resolution rejecting lands bill

BY JIM SANFORD • SPEICAL TO THE MVN • MAY 16, 2008

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The Mineral County Board of Commissioners last week unanimously adopted a resolution rejecting a proposed county lands bill.

**ADVERTISEMENT** Mineral County became the second rural Nevada county to adopt a resolution in opposition to a lands bill, as Lyon County did so last month.

This resolution requests that all work on the proposed Mineral County Lands Bill cease immediately as "we cannot and do not support the proposed Mineral County Lands Bill as presented; and at this time, we respectfully decline the inclusion of Mineral County in any proposed lands bill that will affect Mineral County or the public lands within the county.

"At the present time the Mineral County Board of Commissioners is not prepared to acquire additional federal lands under any lands bill, and no such additional land is required by Mineral County," reads the first paragraph of the resolution.

The resolution is reprinted below:

MINERAL COUNTY RESOLUTION NO. 08-005

FORMALLY REJECTING PROPOSED MINERAL COUNTY LANDS BILL

WHEREAS, at the present time the Mineral County Board of Commissioners is not prepared to acquire additional federal lands under any lands bill, and no such additional land is required by Mineral County for its present needs; and

WHEREAS, the people of Mineral County and the Mineral County Board of Commissioners have consistently voiced strong opposition to various segments of any proposed draft of a Mineral County Lands Bill that would include the designation of "Wilderness Areas," formally adopting NO WILDERNESS resolutions twice, once in 1984 and again on March 6, 2008, even though the Nevada Congressional Delegation has consistently informed us that Wilderness designations are required in all lands bills for passage by the U.S. Congress; and

WHEREAS, the Mineral County Board of Commissioners feels their input and the input of their constituents are not being incorporated into any consideration of the bill and particularly where it regards the designation of "Wilderness Areas" of public lands that do not qualify as such under the Congressional definition or otherwise; and

WHEREAS, the proposed draft of a Mineral County Lands Bill, over the objections of the Mineral County Board of Commissioners and the citizens of Mineral County, has been put on a fast track through the legislative 'process,' leaving Mineral County at risk due to lack of proper planning for future needs and considerations; such planning being of utmost importance when considering acceptance of any lands bill; and

WHEREAS, the 'process' for a lands bill is not outlined in any statute and, therefore, is not a defined and predictable process, allows special interest groups to change it in Washington, D.C. away from the affected government and its constituents, and allows amendment without any vote, review or control at the local level; and

WHEREAS, the effort to take away local control of water resources within the proposed wilderness areas and force thousands of acres of unwanted wilderness upon our citizens is not acceptable; and

WHEREAS, the Mineral County Board of Commissioners have found that the negative impacts to Mineral County and its citizens, as presented by the delegation to date, far outweigh the possible benefits of this lands bill; and

WHEREAS, Nevada Governor Jim Gibbons, in his March 12, 2008 letter to the Nevada Congressional Delegation, stated: "I will continue to voice my opposition to any federal legislation that is not a result of local coordination, cooperation and support. Therefore I respectfully request you do not move forward with legislation until such time as Mineral and Lyon counties choose to support the effort;" and

WHEREAS, Nevada Congressman Dean Heller on April 2, 2008 issued a press release calling for "another look at the development of this lands bill," and stated that legislation "must have the support of local communities that will be affected by such a bill;" and

WHEREAS, U.S. Senator Harry Reid in an April 8, 2008 letter wrote: "As I have stated many times, Senator Ensign, Congressman Heller and I have no interest in forcing legislation on communities that do not wish to participate in this type of process" and, "If the counties decide formally that this is something they do not want to pursue, we will honor that request;" and

WHEREAS, U.S. Senator Harry Reid affirmed April 15, 2008, on KRNVTV's Nevada Newsmakers, his pledge not to force a lands bill upon Lyon and Mineral counties if they do not want one;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that effective immediately, we, the Mineral County Board of Commissioners as the governing body of Mineral County, on behalf of our constituents, in unanimous agreement, respectfully request that all work on the proposed Mineral County Lands Bill cease immediately as we can not and do not support the proposed Mineral County Lands Bill as presented; and at this time, we respectfully decline the inclusion of Mineral County in any proposed lands bill that will affect Mineral County or the public lands within the County; and