

From: [Senator John Ensign@ensign.senate.gov](mailto:Senator_John_Ensign@ensign.senate.gov)

To:

Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2008 1:40 PM

Subject: Correspondence from Senator Ensign

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April 1, 2008

Ms. Darlene Reed
Hawthorne, Nevada 89415

Dear Ms. Reed:

Thank you for taking the time to contact me about public lands bills in both Lyon and Mineral Counties. Your interest in this issue is important to me, and I am always grateful to those who take the time to inform me of their views.

Over the last several months, my staff and I have been talking with local elected officials, ranchers, farmers, outdoorsmen, environmental groups, tribal leaders, etc., in Lyon and Mineral Counties about the prospect of introducing a comprehensive lands bill. While we have had many discussions with local stakeholders and held numerous public meetings in both counties, no bill has been written. In fact, no bill has to be written at all.

As you know, there has been some recent news about a proposal which would designate hundreds of thousands of acres in Lyon and Mineral County as wilderness area. This wilderness proposal is simply a plan introduced by a select group of citizens who are interested in environmental protection. However, let me be clear: this proposal does not have my backing or the endorsement of the Nevada delegation.

The collaborative and compromising nature of these lands bills among various stakeholders is the reason they are ultimately successful. The elected boards of Commissioners in Lyon and Mineral Counties have not determined whether they wish to formally engage in the lands bills negotiation process. While I am hopeful that they will look at a lands bill as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for their constituencies, should they decide not to participate in the process, I would be opposed to imposing a bill that does not have local support.

Nevada's congressional delegation has worked together over the past eight years to pass into law four comprehensive, bipartisan public lands bills - one in White Pine County, one in Lincoln County, and two in Clark County. The first Clark County bill I

coauthored, the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 (SNPLMA), is widely recognized as a model for managing federal land in the West. The SNPLMA allows for the auction of surplus federal lands in the Las Vegas Valley. The proceeds from these auctions fund our schools, improve visitor facilities on federal lands, and allow the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to protect environmentally sensitive land around our state.

The congressional delegation and I have encouraged each county in Nevada to consider developing a lands bill. Because of the large amount of federal land in Nevada, the bills serve as an important mechanism to plan for the future, determine how much growth will occur, ensure that natural resources are protected, and provide revenue to local governments for parks, trails, and other quality-of-life amenities. The content of the lands bills comes from the public. They are developed through a collaborative process that puts diverse groups of people at the table such as business groups, local governments, federal managers, environmentalists, conservationists, utilities, and ordinary citizens.

Thank you again for sharing your thoughts with me. Please feel free to contact me in the future on matters of importance to you. Should you have any other questions or comments or would like to sign up for my monthly newsletter, please do not hesitate to either write or e-mail me via my website at <http://ensign.senate.gov>.

Sincerely,

JOHN ENSIGN
United States Senator

JE/BC

Your thoughts and opinions are important. Unfortunately, any replies to this e-mail will not be received and processed. If you want to contact Senator Ensign electronically again please visit:

http://ensign.senate.gov/forms/email_form.cfm

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