



Working with Communities to Protect Their Land Air and Water

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Great Basin Resource Watch comments to Nevada Mining Oversight and Accountability Commission

John Hadder, Director

Good morning Commissioners and thank you for taking time for public comment.

On March 18 Assembly Bill 346 was introduced. The text of this bill was sent to Anita and Terry, so you may have it in your meeting packets. This bill revises language in the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) to require reclamation of pit lakes to fulfill a minimum recreational use for the pit lake. Recall that GBRW presented information on Pit lakes last year with recommending just such legislation. At the end of our presentation we had these requests of the Commission:

- The Commission recommend to the Nevada Legislature that state statutes be modified or created to require a beneficial use for all current and future pit lakes.
- We also request that the Commission direct the NDEP work with the mining industry to develop a reclamation cost estimate of compliance for recreational postmining pit lake use and report on finding by the next meeting of the Commission.
- We further propose that the Lone Tree pit lake be used as the sample for this estimate. The Lone Tree pit lake will be quite large, it does pose representative challenges in terms of public access, it has had acid and toxicity problems requiring treatment, and its near the Humboldt River. Using the Lone Tree pit lake should serve as a conservative example.

In our view information from the study we suggested will be very helpful to legislators in discussion of AB 346, which is why we requested the study in the first place well in advance of the legislative session. Is there any progress on the request for the study? Will the commission take action on this request?

GBRW continues to support the resolution SJR 15 that is before the legislature again in this 2013 legislative session. The mining industry should not be given special tax status and the legislature should be allowed to develop a just and fair taxation scheme for the mining industry, which appears to be the will of the public.

GBRW would like to thank this Commission for placing the issue of large-scale mining in the Historic Comstock and inviting the Comstock Residence Association to present their perspective on this issue. About ten years ago when Oil Dri attempted large-scale open-pit mining in Hungry Valley it was determined that such an operation was incompatible with the residential lifestyle of people in the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. In the Comstock there are tow additional impacts to the Historic District and Carson River Mercury Superfund Site.

To fully appreciate the situation in the Comstock GBRW suggests that this Commission invite a representative from the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony to present their community perspective on the attempt by Oil Dri to develop a large-scale mine in their backyard and how it would have impacted them. In addition, we recommend the commission invite the EPA and NDEP to discuss the current status of the Carson River Mercury Superfund Site and the vision forward.

Great Basin Resource Watch as always is open to assisting the Commission in any way to motivate actions on these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Hadder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "H".

John Hadder, Director