

Testimony presented to the Nevada Mining Oversight and Accountability Commission, March 28, 2013 by Larry Wahrenbrock, P. O. Box 246, Silver City, NV 89428.

Good Morning Chairman and members of the Committee. I want to thank you for this opportunity to address the critical issues facing the State of Nevada regarding the mining industry. My name is Larry Wahrenbrock. I am a resident and own a historic home in Silver City, where I have lived since 1973. May I say that your task is an onerous one.

Contemporary open pit mining destroys the environment on an industrial scale. The industry leaves a trail of destruction and degradation. Reclamation is required but only when feasible. You merely need to look at the myriad of abandoned open pit mines, some of which are public health and safety hazards, to get a feel for the problem. When looked at closely, there are hidden costs for the people of Nevada that are unaccounted for.

The future health of Nevada will be attained only by a sustainable economic model. Mining can be an integral part of that model only when it pays its way in full. When it no longer leaves gigantic unreclaimed pits, when it no longer adversely affects our water supplies, and when it is required to comprehensively mitigate all of its impacts on our natural and human environment.. When it is no longer subsidized by a preferential tax structure. When it leaves in its wake, land which is at least as productive as it was before the mining began.

Tourism and outdoor recreation are the largest sources of income for Nevada. Tourism is a renewable economic engine, especially cultural tourism. People enjoy seeing the "real thing". The historic Railroad in Ely and the V&T, the Lincoln highway, the Pony Express Route, portions of the Oregon Trail and the trail to California are here to see and experience. The historic towns and landscapes of Eureka, Austin, Dayton, Genoa, Gold Hill, Silver City, Virginia City, the list goes on. These are cultural resources that provide long term economic stability without being depleted. Cultural resources contribute to a sustainable economic model. Our cultural resources are in need of protection. Mining practices that adversely impact these resources need to be fully mitigated if allowed at all. The people of Nevada pay an alarming hidden cost by allowing the mining industry to behave as they do.

As I see it, this Commission needs to look closely at the totality of impacts modern mining has on the State of Nevada. You need to broadly assess the current regulatory environment. Today there exists a truncated permitting process that leaves the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. One agency or governmental jurisdiction accepts "carte blanche" that the other is providing adequate oversight concerning its particular purview. Whether it is Water Resources, Mine Reclamation, Hazardous Materials, Mine Safety, Environmental Protection, a local Planning Department, the BLM or the USFS, the Comstock Historic District Commission, just to name a few, the gauntlet of permitting is staggering and complex. It is often opaque. I believe that a consolidated clearing house approach is called for. The public, local governments and the industry would all benefit from a single entity empowered to review compliance with regulatory requirements, ensure environmental responsibility, and provide a transparent public process for the review of proposed mining operations.

My suggestion is for this Commission to recommend that a coordinated and comprehensive review mechanism be put into place to protect the people and those resources which provide long term sustainable economic value to Nevada. It is no longer reasonable to sacrifice renewable resources for the short term profits of mining.

Thank You for your time
and

Thank you for your service to the people of Nevada.

