



STATE OF NEVADA  
**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
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**MINUTES**

**STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING**

Nevada State Conservation Commission  
Conference Call Meeting  
Richard H. Bryan Building, Director's Conference Room, 1st Floor  
901 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89701  
Monday, August 7, 2017 at 1:30 p.m.

The Nevada State Conservation Commission considered and acted on the following items.

**Board Members Present by Telephone:** Chairman Joe Sicking, Paradise-Sonoma CD; Jake Tibbitts, Eureka CD; Leland Wallace, Esmeralda County CD; Kevin Roukey, Washoe-Storey CD; Dr. Sherm Swanson, UNCE/CABNR; Maggie Orr, Lincoln County CD, and Meghan Brown, NV Dept. of Agriculture.

**Board Members Absent:** Vice Chairman Eric Rieman, Carson Valley CD and Agee Smith, Northeast Elko CD.

**Others Present:** Bettina Scherer, Conservation Districts Program Manager; Sandy Quilici, DCNR Director's Office; Dominique Etchegoyhen, DCNR Deputy Director, and Lauren Williams, Conservation Staff Specialist, Ely Area.

**I. CALL TO ORDER, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM**

- A. Chairman Sicking called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.  
A quorum was confirmed.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENTS** There were no public comments.

**III. REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES - \* FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

- A. The May 15, 2017, approval of meeting minutes were moved to the next Commission meeting. . **\*NO ACTION TAKEN\***

**IV. BRIEF UPDATE ON CONSERVATION DISTRICTS PROGRAM - \*FOR DISCUSSION ONLY\***

- A. There was no update today. Chairman Sicking congratulated Bettina Scherer in her new position as Conservation Districts Program Manager.

**V. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY OFFICIALS (NACO), REGARDING THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT'S (BLM) EFFORTS TO MAKE CHANGES TO THEIR PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS - \* FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

A. Commissioner Tibbitts gave an overview; he said in March, Interior Secretary Zinke sent a memo to BLM right after planning 2.0 was overturned that precludes BLM from moving forward with regulations. The memo has five areas of emphasis. Secretary Zinke wants BLM to review the planning process and the NEPA process and within 60 days report back to him on how they could streamline the planning and build good neighbor relationships with state and local government. The 60 day deadline for BLM to have the report back to the Secretary would be at the end of September.

There is a core counties group in the west working on this that Commissioner Tibbitts is involved in as representing Eureka County. This includes other western counties, the Conservation Districts in Wyoming, and NACo (National Association of Counties).

The Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) has put together the Nevada core group and the CD's are included. There have been strategy meetings to get everyone on the same page. A recent development is that Sheila Anderson at the Governor's Office is taking the role of making sure the state agencies have a voice. The State Land Use Planning Advisory Council (SLUPAC) which Commissioner Tibbitts is the Chairman are also involved. It was agreed that the State Conservation Commission should have a meeting to also weigh in. Tim Rubald drafted a letter and Commissioner Tibbitts suggested we request the letter be submitted to Sheila at the Governor's Office to be part of the state packet. Chairman Sicking agreed.

Commissioner Orr said she is writing a letter from NvACD, but she was unsure of where the letter should be sent. Commissioner Tibbitts said NACO had the same question because they would not be part of the state packet.

It was agreed that the NvACD letter and the Commission's letter should be sent to the Acting BLM Director.

Commissioner Brown said it would be good to send the letter to the Acting State BLM Director, Marci Todd.

Chairman Sicking added John Ruhs along with the Governor's Office.

Chairman Sicking said we will take comments on the draft letter now.

Commissioner Tibbitts said in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, change "We are aware of" to "We have been involved in" and change "the Nevada Association of County Officials" to "the Nevada Association of Counties".

Commissioner Brown asked to change the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence from "met today" to "met on August 7, 2017,".

Commissioner Tibbitts suggested to change to the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to read "We have been involved in the current efforts being put forth by the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) working with Nevada local governments and other state agencies and strongly support their efforts." Then add a new sentence "We also adopt their input put forward in this effort."

Commissioner Tibbitts said in the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph change the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence to read "The Districts themselves, which are locally elected entities, have special expertise regarding local conditions, conservation of renewable natural resources and the coordination of local programs which makes conservation districts uniquely suitable to serve as cooperating agencies for the purpose of NEPA and local government coordination for the purposes of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The Nevada Legislature has officially recognized this special expertise through a legislative determination in Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 548."

Commissioner Tibbitts suggested in the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to change the word "definitive" to "focused".

Commissioner Tibbitts said in the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph in the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence to change "if the BLM would include the Districts in the initial phase of the planning process," to read "if the BLM would include the Districts in the initial phase of the planning process and closely coordinate throughout the entire process,"

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to change "in a strongly collaborative manner," to "in a strongly coordinated manner,".

In the 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, the 1st bulleted item: Commissioner Tibbitts suggested to change the first word “Collaborate” to “Coordinate”. Commissioner Swanson said where it says “collaborative exchange with all entities affected,” change to “collaborative exchange with all local entities affected.”

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> bulleted item: Commissioner Tibbitts asked to add to the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence “and local support will be established.”

In the 4<sup>th</sup> bulleted item: In the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence Commissioner Swanson changed “this data is” to “these data are”. Commissioner Tibbitts suggested to remove the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence “This is especially true with any socio economic data.” Also to change the last sentence from “as national level data” to “as national or regional level data”.

Commissioner Tibbitts proposed adding a 6<sup>th</sup> bulleted item: “Establish formal coordination protocols (i.e. MOU) to work on or to build relationships when not in an official planning or NEPA process.” Commissioner Orr suggested a 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to say “Additionally, to have management encourage staff to take the time to build relationships of trust because to do so will save time in the long run.”

Regarding the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph: Commissioner Tibbitts suggested not including this in the cover letter. The matrix that NACO is creating will contain specific examples. He suggested that if we have examples from our Conservation Districts that we submit them to Tori Sundheim to have her work them into their matrix. Also to add a sentence “As already noted, we adopt by reference the comments from NACO and other state agencies that provide specific examples of how the planning and NEPA processes could be improved.”

On the closing paragraph: Commissioner Tibbitts said in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence to change “ready to assist both NACO and the BLM” to “ready to assist the BLM”.

Commissioner Tibbitts suggested the change in the closing from “Joe Sicking, President” to “Joe Sicking, Chairman”.

Commissioner Tibbitts asked the Commission to decide the cc’s for the letter. It was agreed to be:

- Michael Nedd, Acting Director of BLM
- John Ruhs, Acting Deputy Director of Operations, BLM
- Marci Todd, Acting BLM Nevada State Director
- Cynthia Moses-Nedd, DOI-BLM Liaison for State and Local Government
- Secretary Zinke, Department of the Interior
- Sheila Anderson, Nevada Office of the Governor

Commissioner Roukey made a motion to submit the letter as it is revised, Commissioner Orr seconded the motion, there was a vote and the motion passed unanimously. **\*ACTION TAKEN\***

## **VI. COMMISSIONER ITEMS - \*FOR DISCUSSION ONLY\***

A. Commissioner Swanson had some questions for Commissioner Tibbitts; it was agreed that Commissioner Swanson will email his questions to Commissioner Tibbitts to review.

Commissioner Swanson said there are interviews in process for a new UNR Cooperative Extension Director.

## **VII. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

It was agreed to meet in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> week of October after the CD reports are received.

## **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS** There were no public comments.

## **IX. ADJOURNMENT - \*FOR POSSIBLE ACTION\***

Chairman Sicking adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m. **\*NO ACTION TAKEN\***