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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS' SALARIES

1. Q: Why don't county governments set their own salaries like cities do?

A: Article 4, Sections 20 and 32 of the Nevada Constitution provide that the legislature establish and regulate the compensation and fees of county officers. Thus there is no authority for counties to fix the salaries of certain elected officials.

2. Q: Which county elected officials' salaries are set by the legislature?

A: Commissioner, district attorney, sheriff, clerk, assessor, auditor, recorder, treasurer, and public administrator.

3. Q: Why is NACO proposing to increase county salaries in the 2003 Legislative Session?

A: It has been eight years since the Legislature last increased the annual salaries of the above county elected officials.

4. Q: Why haven't salary increases for county elected officials been increased every two years?

A: Historically county elected officials salaries were adjusted on a county-by-county basis by a legislator representing a particular county. However, that practice was changed over time in favor of a more comprehensive approach addressing the needs of all counties.

Beginning in 1985 the Nevada Association of Counties coordinated the request from various associations representing elected county officials. At that time it became a priority to review salaries every six years beginning in 1989 with the passage of a comprehensive NACO salary bill. Another NACO salary bill was passed in 1995. However, last session the NACO salary bill, AB 256, was replaced by a comprehensive salary bill, AB 606, that passed the Assembly and was scheduled for a Senate vote in the final hour of the session when time ran out.

5. Q: Can the Legislature provide for annual or more frequent increases and avoid the problem with "playing catch-up" in setting county elected official salaries?

A: Yes. There are two ways the legislature can provide for more frequent increases. (1) The Legislature can initial a change in the state constitution. AJR 1, of the 17th Special Session, adopted June 14, 2001, will be before this session. If approved, AJR 1 will be placed on the ballot for statewide approval by the voters. (2) The Legislature can adjust the county elected officials' salaries every two years when the Legislature meets, thus reducing the "catch-up" effect.

ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

DATE: 2/24/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT D, 1 of 2

SUBMITTED BY: Robert Hadfield

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
REGARDING COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS' SALARIES**

6. Q: **What oversight of this process aside from NACO has been provided by the Legislature?**

A: In 1995 the last NACO salary bill was incorporated into the recommendations of the "Commission to Review the Compensation of Certain Elected Public Officers." The Commission was created by Senate Bill 221 of the 1994 Legislative Session and convened in 1994-95 to complete its recommendations to the 1995 Legislative Session. The Commission was not funded following the 1995 session. However, on November 9, 2000 Governor Guinn, by Executive Order, established a Task Force to study and make recommendations concerning the compensation provided to legislators, supreme court justices, district judges and elected county officials.

NACO attended Task Force meetings, provided testimony and made recommendations for inclusion into the final report issued January 12, 2001, and presented it to the Governor. The recommendation of this Task Force serves as the basis for AB 66.

7. Q: **Do all counties support the NACO Salary Bill AB 66?**

A: Yes. Last session all counties supported the salary bill and we have the same commitment this session. We do expect at least one county, Mineral County, to avail themselves of the implementation delay allowed in the bill.