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Scott K. Sisco, Interim Director

Department of Cultural Affairs

Mr. Chairman, for the record my name is Scott Sisco, and I am the Interim Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs. Mr. Chairman, as you will recall, when I met with you, you encouraged me to take a little time to explain to the new committee members what it is that the Department of Cultural Affairs does. I'd like to take the chairman up on that generous offer and provide a little backup information on the Department. We've provided a handout that I think will help describe the services of the Department. Behind the coversheet of the handout we've provided for you today, is an organization chart that details the Department of Cultural Affairs and the four divisions of the Department. In addition to the Nevada Arts Council, which we'll be discussing today, there are three other divisions, including the Nevada State Library and Archives (which you had a slight introduction to yesterday), the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Division of Museums and History.

Since all of you will eventually be voting on the Executive Budget, and of course the Governor's Tax plan, the next page details the overall request for the Department of Cultural Affairs. As you can see, and I believe this is typical of many state agencies this biennium, our budget request includes an overall reduction of 5.20%. The general fund was cut by \$591,069, including Arts programs you'll be hearing about shortly, and the Department reduced staff by slightly under 11 positions. The only enhancement unit for the entire department was to cover rent now required for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Las Vegas. The Governor restored \$92,964 in funding cuts that were proposed for bookmobiles in rural counties and library databases.

Turning the page you'll note the very small piece of the general fund pie that the Department of Cultural Affairs receives. As you can see, the Department receives .48, or less than ½ of 1 percent of the general fund. On the following page, the charts detail the millions of Nevada citizens who receive or request services from the various programs of the Department. I would like to mention, this is only those services where actual counts are taken. Many of the services provided, or supported by the agencies of the Department do not collect counts that could also be included here.

Turning the next page, you'll find the section dealing strictly with the Nevada Arts Council. Again, there's an organizational chart on the following page listing the various program areas of the Arts Council that Susan will be happy to discuss if you have any questions after we discuss the bill. The following page details the cuts made to the Arts Council budget this biennium, and the last several pages provide more in-depth detail on the Nevada Arts Council.

Last, just before we move on to the actual bill, I'd like to take a quick moment to talk about the important role that culture plays in the State's economic and overall development. History shows us that our country has developed and prospered around communities with access to culture, the arts, museums, libraries, and of course the humanities. New York, San Francisco, Denver, Santa Fe and numerous others, all were desirable to businesses because of the available cultural activities.

Today, businesses continue to look for these resources when they decide where they will move, and the communities they plan to invest in.

More and more, citizens and local businesses also recognize the importance of, and support, cultural resources. Just this last November, Nevadans approved Question 1, providing for taxes to be increased in a \$200 million in bond issue to protect, preserve, and improve cultural resources, while at the same time turning down two special use tax exemptions.

That bond issue included \$35 million to fund a new State museum in Las Vegas.

No discussion on culture would be complete without mentioning Cultural Tourism. Over the last decade, Cultural Tourism has become a prominent factor in how travelers select their vacation destinations. Cultural Tourism brings visitors to every community in our state. And those who travel for these purposes, stay longer, and spend more.

These are just a few of the reasons why we feel so strongly about the importance of, and the need for, the services provided by the Department of Cultural Affairs. When the time comes, we hope you'll remember that the majority of what the Governor is trying to accomplish has to do with making the State the type of place where we want our children and grandchildren to not only grow up, but to live and build their futures.

With that introduction, I'll move on to the bill unless anyone has any general questions about the Department of Cultural Affairs and/or any of the agencies within it.

The bill being presented today, A.B. 224, is the Department's only bill this session. We had originally anticipated that we'd only have this one chance to bring the new committee members up to date on services provided by the Department. However, it appears that this year there

are a considerable number of bills that have, or are being, introduced which affect the various agencies and/or programs of the Department, all of which will bring us before you numerous times this session. Today's bill is hopefully somewhat less concerning than yesterday's visit, allowing us some time to provide information on what the Nevada Arts Council actually does.

The bill being presented today clears up confusion in NRS Chapter 233C pertaining to the Nevada Arts Council. In particular, this rewrite of the chapter intends to match the statutes to the actual operational and organizational structure of the division as it currently exists within the Department. Also, and of major importance, this bill clears up a very confusing name situation which I am about to explain.

The Department of Museums, Library and Arts, renamed in the 2001 session to the Department of Cultural Affairs, was created in a state reorganization in 1993. At that time, the Nevada Arts Council was placed in the Department as one of the four divisions. Now this is the part where it starts getting confusing. The Nevada Arts Council, the council, which originally was appointed by and reported directly to the Governor, has the same name as the State Agency, the Nevada Arts Council, now an agency under the Department of Cultural Affairs. The Nevada Arts Council, the council, originally oversaw the administrative and operations of the agency which changed with the reorganization in 1993. If you were to look at NRS 233C as it sits right now, you will see from that language that it's very difficult, if not impossible, to tell the difference between the Nevada Arts Council, the Council, and the Nevada Arts Council, the State Agency. Again, in brief, what we currently have is two entities named the same thing. The Nevada Arts Council, appointed by the Governor to promote the Arts and oversee grants distribution, and the Nevada Arts Council, the State agency, which operates in and is overseen by the Department of Cultural Affairs.

In addition to renaming the Nevada Arts Council, the council appointed by the Governor, to the Board of the Nevada Arts Council, the bill also defines the responsibilities of both the newly named Board and the Nevada Arts Council, the state agency.

Within this bill, the Board responsibilities are similar to other Boards providing guidance and oversight of certain Department functions including:

1. Recommendations for strategic planning, determining and updating the mission, goals, and objectives of the Division, and recommendations for cultural policies and priorities for the state of Nevada.
2. The Board will hold regular meetings to receive public comment and discuss issues relevant to carrying out its duties.
3. And, one of the major functions includes responsibility for reviewing grant applications and making final approval on State and Federal grants provided by the State. This was one of the primary areas of concern for which we found the need to update the regulations. Based on the current statutes there was some confusion on which entity, the Nevada Arts Council, or the Nevada Arts Council, actually had the authority to adopt the necessary regulations.

Further, the bill defines the duties of the Administrator to clearly indicate organizational structure as the Division fits into the Department, and to match the responsibilities for the Division Administrator to those of the other Division Administrators of the Department.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, would you like to cover any questions members may have about the bill itself, or move on to Ms. Boskoff, who will spend a little time discussing and answering any questions about the services provided by the Nevada Arts Council?

Thank you.

Introduce Susan