

## DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or [library@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:library@lcb.state.nv.us).

## SB 328

**Proposed By:** - Western Nevada Development District (WNDD)  
Parkway Professional Center  
3208 Goni Road, Suite 183  
Carson City, Nevada 89706

Mary Lou Bentley, Executive Director  
Phone - (775) 883-7333  
Fax - (775) 883-0722  
e-mail - [mlbentley@wndd.org](mailto:mlbentley@wndd.org)

### ***Purpose of the Bill:***

To recognize WNDD, in statute, and allow WNDD to apply for and deliver various state and federal programs on behalf of its members – and - to authorize and provides guidelines for the creation of additional Regional Development Districts in the State of Nevada.

### ***What is a Regional Development District?***

- A **voluntary** association of local governments in contiguous counties
- A unique umbrella organization that facilitates intergovernmental cooperation and communication among and between neighboring local governments, private sectors, and minority groups
- A proven means for small metropolitan and rural governments to pool scarce financial resources, to identify common needs and opportunities, and to implement regional programs designed to address local issues.
- A proven method of building the capacity of small metropolitan and rural local governments.
- WNDD was incorporated in 1983, and to-date, WNDD is the **only** such organization in the State of Nevada. (See attached information re: WNDD).

### ***This Legislation will:***

- **authorize and provide guidelines** for the creation of Regional Development Districts
- **permit** WNDD (and future Development Districts) to apply for and administer a variety of state and federal funds on behalf of their members
- **permit** local governments to pool their funds and share professional staff
- **permit** local governments in contiguous counties to work together in addressing a broad range of common issues, concerns, and opportunities

### ***This Legislation will not:***

- require the creation of Development Districts
- appropriate general funds
- grant taxing authority nor authorize to impose regional planning requirements or regulations
- duplicate existing programs

**Statement for the Record  
On  
SB 328  
Providing for the Establishment of Regional Development Districts**

**By  
Mary Lou Bentley  
Executive Director of the Western Nevada Development District**

**WNDD, 3208 Goni Road, Suite 183, Parkway Professional Center, Carson City, Nevada 89706  
Phone: (775) 883-7333  
Fax: (775) 883-0722  
E-mail: mlbentley@wndd.org**

**Before the  
Nevada Senate Government Affairs Committee  
Carson City, Nevada  
March 24, 2003**

Thank you, Chairman O'Connell and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of SB 328.

My name is Mary Lou Bentley, and I am the Executive Director of the Western Nevada Development District (WNDD) which is headquartered in Carson City and serves a 7-county region in Western Nevada. Incorporated in 1983, WNDD is a designated and funded Economic Development District recognized by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

We are one of well over 300 such organizations located throughout the United States that provide professional and technical assistance to over 1,800 counties and 15,000 small cities and towns, many of which have little or no professional staff.

Regional development districts are voluntary multi-county planning and development organizations that encourage cooperation among local government officials, citizens, and the private sector. Most regional development districts were initially created in the 1960's and 1970's to serve as the catalysts for strategic planning in small metropolitan and rural communities.

They help identify local needs and priorities and deliver a myriad of federal and state programs on a regional basis. Depending on local needs and identified priorities, regional development districts administer and deliver housing, community and economic development, transportation, and other programs.

Nevada is among a handful of states (the Hawaiian Islands, and less than 5 small eastern States such as Delaware and New Jersey) that have **not** designated sub-state regions. WNDD has "self-defined" its region. WNDD originally served only Carson City, Douglas, Lyon, and Storey counties. In the early-mid 1990's, Churchill, Mineral, and Pershing Counties also became members. The proposed legislation allows other Nevada cities and counties to do the same.

WNDD operates with a staff of 5: the Executive Director, a Planning Director, a Project Developer, a Housing Coordinator, and a staff assistant. Member counties pay an annual assessment of approximately \$56,000 that is the basis for all WNDD funding. Our total annual operating budget is approximately \$500,000.

During its 20-year history, WNDD has helped its members build their local staff capacities, attain goals, create thousands of long-term private sector jobs, and deliver a variety of affordable housing programs. I have provided a detailed list of projects and funds in your packet along with a current listing of the WNDD Board of Directors.

Madam Chairman, WNDD strongly supports the goals and intent of SB 328 for three main reasons.

**First, Madam Chairman, this legislation will allow WNDD members to pursue additional programs that are most effectively and cost-efficiently delivered on a regional basis.** It will allow WNDD to serve as grantee for US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) affordable housing programs and relieve Lyon County of its responsibilities as Lead Agency for the Western Nevada HOME Consortium (WNHC).

WNDD facilitated the creation of the WNHC in the mid-1990s. Before that time, HUD granted affordable housing funds directly to the Reno/Sparks/Washoe County HOME Consortium, the Las Vegas/Clark County HOME Consortium, and to the State of Nevada Housing Division. The Housing Division received \$3 Million of which approximately \$750,000 was used for affordable housing programs and projects in all of rural Nevada.

The WNHC is the second multi-county consortium in the nation and has directly received and expended \$4,551,000 in new HUD affordable housing dollars for our 7 counties and 3 incorporated cities. Today, the Housing Division still receives the same \$3 Million each year – the minimum amount provided by HUD to any state but their direct responsibility is limited to only those cities and counties outside our 7-county consortium, the Washoe Consortium and the Clark County consortium.

While WNDD has provided the administrative staff and the delivery of the regional Down Payment Assistance Program for first-time homebuyers, HUD requires that one of our cities or counties act as Lead Agency for the WNHC. Lyon County has served in this capacity since 1997 – thus assuming responsibility for funds being distributed across our 7-county region. This legislation will permit WNDD to act in that capacity putting the responsibility at the regional level.

This legislation will also allow WNDD to pursue EPA Brownfields funding on a regional basis. Two recent reports from the National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation cited a number of impediments to successful Brownfields work in small metropolitan and rural areas. These include a lack of local professional staff expertise and time, limited project implementation funds, liability concerns and property ownership issues. [Source: Reclaiming Rural America's Brownfields: Alternatives to Abandoned Property. NADO Research Foundation, April 2001.]

A regional Brownfields program would reinforce the concept that local governments have options beyond cleaning up sites to preserve green space and curb urban sprawl. Local communities could pursue strategies for taking previously productive industrial and commercial facilities and return them to viable economic centers. This represents the best of both worlds: creating jobs and increasing local revenue while also raising community pride and environmental awareness, promoting positive land use, and encouraging reinvestments in older areas. Sites that once marred the landscape could be put back into productive use.

The NADO report cited an example in Vermont where local elected officials and community leaders within the area covered by the Southern Windsor County RPC teamed together to address six Brownfields sites including a former Goodyear plant and a machine shop. Today, the adaptive reuse of the site is providing jobs and tax revenue to the local community.

Affordable housing and Brownfields are only two examples of federal programs that require this legislation. There are numerous other federal agencies that provide funding to regional organizations and rural governments including the Departments of Labor, Transportation, Emergency Management and Health and Human Services.

**Second, Madam Chairman, the proposed legislation sets out the procedures other Nevada cities and counties could follow should they choose to create an organization like WNDD.**

Regional development districts provide economies of scale and are the most efficient way to deliver services, particularly in areas with low population density and limited resources. Regional staff has the technical expertise to assess the region's overall resources and to help implement short and long-term strategies. Regional development districts also provide the important link between federal and state programs and the local level where development actually occurs.

Like most of America, Nevada is composed of small cities, counties, and towns. And, like most of America, the majority of our Nevada local governments serve populations under 10,000 and many have fewer than 1,000 residents. Rural Nevada shares many of the same problems as our metropolitan areas such as poverty and high unemployment but face unique obstacles because they are dispersed over hundreds of square miles.

I've been told that WNDD is the best-kept secret in Nevada. The proposed legislation uncovers that secret and would simply provide rural Nevada with an important tool and the ability to pool scarce financial resources and share professional staff. The language in the bill is "permissive" not "required".

It grants local governments the ability to decide whether or not to work together as a region and what their regional priorities and activities should be. WNDD has existed for 20 years because it has served a valuable purpose for its member local governments – not because it is required to exist. We believe other parts of Nevada could benefit from this type of intergovernmental cooperation.

**And, third, Madam Chairman, the proposed legislation provides an efficient and cost-effective method of delivering state and federal programs without expanding state staff.**

WNDD and other regional development organizations, should they be created, can provide the mechanism and professional staff needed to deliver a variety of state and federal programs. The affordable housing program at WNDD is an excellent example. State staff is no longer required to attempt to determine local needs and priorities. Because our local elected officials are now responsible for administering affordable housing funds for our region, they have a much-improved understanding of “affordable housing” and they, not the state or the federal government, determine which activities and projects should be funded.

Another example is the EPA Brownfields program. Brownfields redevelopment activities are complex, costly and time intensive. Therefore, coordination is a major key to success. This includes dialogue and partnerships among the various federal agencies as well as at the local level between local governments, nonprofits, the private sector, and the general public. It also involves open communications among the various levels of government.

NDEP staff is currently responsible for delivering the EPA’s Brownfields program to rural Nevada, and they have done an admirable job, but their task is overwhelming. Limited state staff, located in Carson City, is faced with determining which Nevada local governments might benefit from a Brownfields project and with developing the local capacity to implement the activity.

In the case of WNDD, the proposed legislation would permit your state staff to work with one entity, WNDD, rather than 10 individual local governments. Your state staff time and travel expenses would be greatly reduced, and our local governments would be directly involved and more knowledgeable about the benefits of the program.

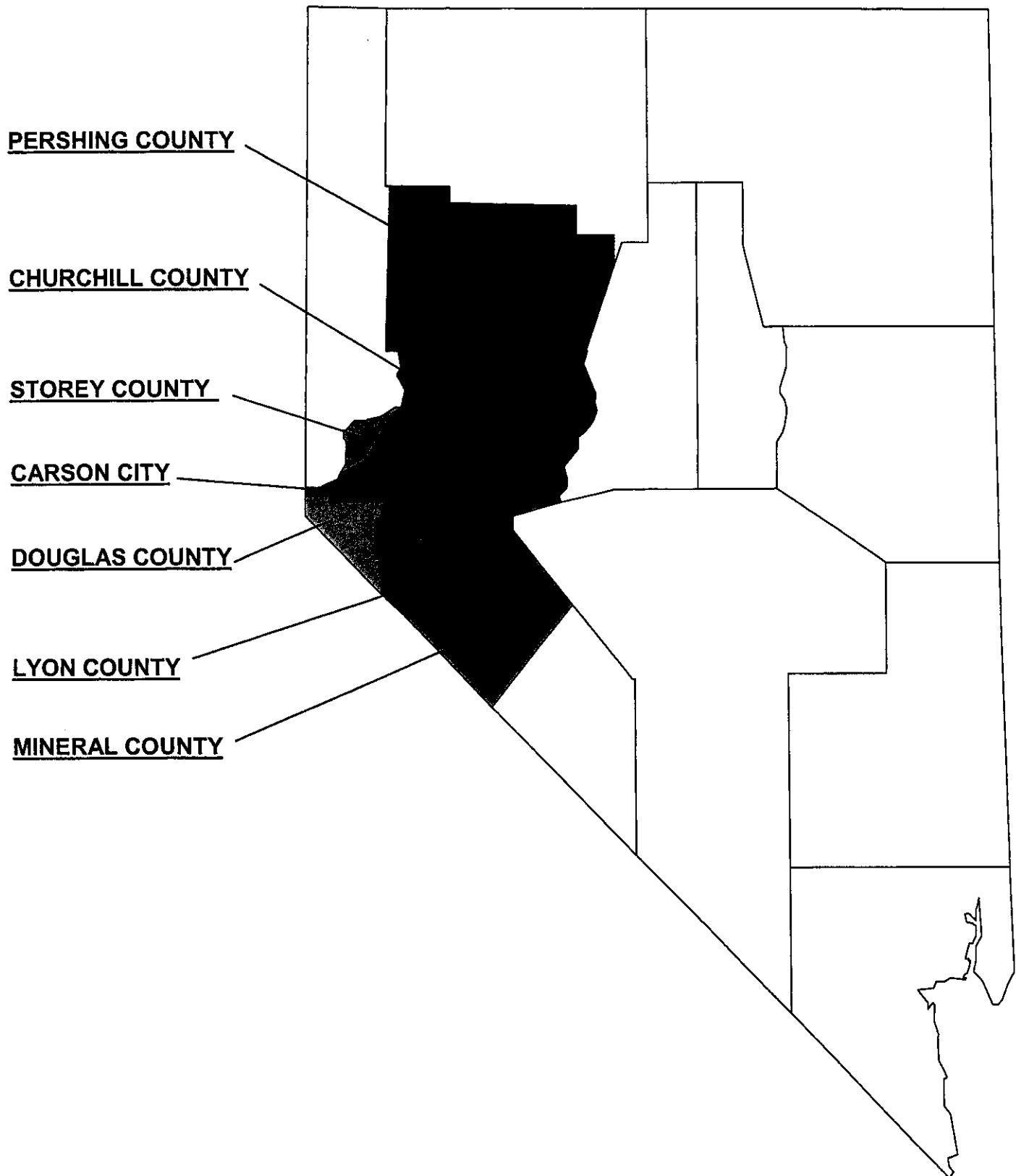


**In conclusion**, Madam Chairman, WNDD has developed a successful track record of partnering with our communities and counties to revitalize their communities, upgrade and expand public facilities, create quality jobs, expand the local tax base, and improve the quality of life in our region.

The legislation will significantly strengthen WNDD's ability to deliver programs on behalf of and at the direction of our local governments and implement the regional goals and objectives as established by our membership. And, we strongly believe that the proposed legislation will give other Nevada communities and counties a valuable addition to their development toolboxes. The proposed legislation insures that the decision is **theirs**.

Madam Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for allowing me to testify on behalf of SB 328. I would welcome any questions you may have.

# WESTERN NEVADA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT



## Community/Economic Development

	<u>US DoC</u>	<u>CDBG</u>	<u>USDA RD</u>	<u>LWCF</u>
Carson City Airport Industrial Park	\$1,539,000			
Douglas County Meridian Industrial Park	450,000			
Yerington Waterline Extension	263,000			
Fernley Wastewater Treatment Facility	490,000			
Fernley Wastewater Treatment Facility	1,300,000			
Carson Valley Industrial Park Drainage	252,750			
V & T Railroad Feasibility Study	18,750			
Disaster Mitigation - flood mapping, etc.	75,000	\$25,000		
Lovelock Wastewater Treatment Facility	1,765,000			
Pershing County Industrial Park		175,000		
Silver Springs Wastewater Treatment	1,500,000	300,000		
USDA RBOG to Assist Mineral County			\$50,000	
Fallon New River Business Park	1,707,000			
Silver Springs Airport Development	150,000			
Silver Springs Engineering		35,000		
Smith Valley Park Acquisition				\$50,000
Regional Economic Dev. Planning Grants	1,500,000			
Sub-totals	\$11,010,500	\$535,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>Total Com/Eco. Development</b>	<b>\$11,645,500</b>			

## Affordable Housing

	<u>HUD/LIHTF</u>
Yerington Garden Apartments	\$175,000
Fallon Self-Help Single Family Homes	60,000
Gardnerville Self-Help Single Family Homes	227,192
Lovelock Owner-occupied Hsg. Rehab.	145,000
Acq/Rehab/Resale Single Family Home	4,335
Regional Owner-occupied Hsg. Rehab.	200,000
River Valley Apts. - Dayton	295,800
Lake Vista Apts. - Stateline	922,094
CHDO Operating - CAHI	75,000
Regional Rental Assist. - Elderly/Disabled	125,000
Regional Homebuyer Assistance	1,379,059
Lockwood Cooperative	155,000
Carson City Owner-occupied Hsg. Rehab.	80,000
Indian Hills Owner-occupied Hsg. Rehab.	80,000
<b>Total Affordable Housing</b>	<b>\$3,923,480</b>

**Combined Totals \$15,568,980**

US DoC - US Department of Commerce, Economic  
Development Administration  
CDBG - US Dept. Housing & Urban Development (HUD)  
Community Development Block Grant  
USDA RD - US Dept. of Agriculture, Rural Development  
LWCF - Land & Water Conservation Fund  
HUD - US Department of Housing & Urban Development  
LIHTF - Nevada Low Income Housing Trust Funds (real  
estate transfer tax)

10

# Western Nevada Development District

<u>Local Government</u>	<u>Representative</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>WNHC</u>
<b>Carson City</b>	Robin Williamson Shelley Aldean Lori Haney	Elected Elected Private/Business Bank of Nevada	X
<b>Churchill County</b>	Gwen Washburn Norman Frey B.J. Selinder Shirley Walker Rick Lattin	Elected Elected County Mgr/ALT Private/Churchill County Economic Development Authority Private/Lattin Farms	X
<b>Douglas County</b>	Bernie Curtis Dan Holler Suzanne Rosevold Kathy Halbardier	Elected County Mgr/ALT Private/Carson Valley Chamber of Commerce Private	X
<b>City of Fernley</b>	David Stix Gary Bacock	Elected City Mgr/ALT	
<b>Lyon County</b>	LeRoy Goodman Phyllis Hunewill Steve Snyder John Sanderson Yvonne Gardner	Elected Elected County Mgr/ALT Private/Lyon County Economic Development Authority Private/General Public	X
<b>Mineral County</b>	Richard Bryant Ron Wolven Shelia Abbe	Elected Private/Mineral County Economic Development Authority Private/Mineral County Business Owner	X
<b>Pershing County</b>	Dave Ayoob Elaine Pommerening	Elected Private/Pershing County Economic Development Authority	
<b>Storey County</b>	Dean Haymore Robert Kershaw	Elected Elected	X
<b>City of Fallon</b>	Ken Tedford Willis Swan	Elected Elected	X
<b>City of Yerington</b>	Doug Homestead Dan Newell	Elected City Mgr/ALT	X
<b>City of Lovelock</b>	Ray Espinoza	Elected	X
<b>Town of Gardnerville</b>	Jerry Smith Jim Park	Elected Town Mgr/ALT	
<b>Under/Unemployed</b>	Bob Wolf	Private/Nevada DETR	//