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**IN SUPPORT OF SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4 COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES**

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

**RONDA HORNBECK
LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

Because of the considerable amount of federal public land in Nevada designated as wilderness area and or wilderness study area, there is a great concern as to the management and restrictions imposed on these lands.

There have been many meetings, discussions, and important input as to these concerns.

We believe that SJR4 best represents the interests of the people of NEVADA. We feel that only those lands that actually qualify as wilderness should be designated wilderness.

We agree that the public has the right of access to their lands. The elderly, the less fit, and those unable to afford horses, must be able to readily access the actual wilderness. Existing roads should not be closed. Multiple points of access are preferable to limited, as this disperses recreationists and enhances the wilderness experience.

We support "cherry stemming" the existing roads into the wilderness area. These include the roads, which have been identified on a map, and those that have not been documented, but have been used historically to allow persons access to private property.

We support the use of appropriately managed grazing and logging as tools for reducing potential fire danger in wilderness areas. If we don't allow the capability to manage the health of the wilderness areas, then eventually when fires strike, the devastation of loss of forest, wildlife, grazing rights, water and soil will be irreplaceable.

We would like to guarantee that all preexisting rights of ranchers concerning grazing permits, water permits and access to land and water necessary for ranching practices be identified. We would like to guarantee that all preexisting rights of any mining claims are identified.

We would also support the habitat improvements, such as water developments that have proven critical in the reestablishment of desert bighorn sheep, upland game birds and numerous other wildlife. The guzzlers that are in place now will need to be maintained and we need to keep access into these areas open. Some of the guzzlers can only be reached by helicopter and we support the importance of proactive and adaptive management strategies.

We support the BLM's designation of suitable and unsuitable wilderness study areas.

We support giving consideration to the communities these wilderness areas will impact. Some decisions could affect private economic activity on public lands.

We would hope that when the wilderness designations are in their final draft, that consideration be given as to how many areas with the same types of wilderness are in close proximity of each other.

We support the designation of Marble Canyon as wilderness area.

We are also in support of any wilderness study areas that are not made wilderness be released and returned to the multiple use land plans.

We support having hearings in Washington, D.C. and Nevada before making any changes to the designation of wilderness.

Thank you for your consideration.