

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, AND
MINING**

**Seventy-Fourth Session
March 7, 2007**

The Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining was called to order by Chair Jerry D. Claborn at 1:31 p.m., on Wednesday, March 7, 2007, in Room 3161 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn, Chair
Assemblyman Joseph Hogan, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson
Assemblyman David Bobzien
Assemblyman John C. Carpenter
Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea
Assemblyman Tom Grady
Assemblyman Ruben Kihuen
Assemblyman John W. Marvel
Assemblyman James Ohrenschall
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jennifer Ruedy, Committee Policy Analyst
J. Randall Stephenson, Committee Counsel
Sherrada Fielder, Committee Secretary
Matt Mowbray, Committee Assistant
Millicent Jorgenson, Committee Manager



OTHERS PRESENT:

Leo Drozdoff, Administrator, Nevada Division of Environmental
Protection, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Gary Wolff, Business Agent, Nevada State Law Enforcement
Officers' Association
Paul Enos, Chief Executive Officer, Nevada Motor Transport Association
Gary Milliken, GEM Consulting, Representing the Association of
Contractors, Las Vegas Chapter, Nevada
Russell Fields, President, Nevada Mining Association
Dylan Shaver, Nevada Petroleum Marketers Association
Jack Jeffrey, Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council
Liz Sorenson, Lobbyist, Communications Workers of America,
Local #9413, Nevada
Colleen Cripps, Ph.D., Deputy Administrator, Nevada Division of
Environmental Protection, Department of Conservation and Natural
Resources
Mike Montero, Lobbyist, Nevada Cattlemen's Association
Boyd M. Spratling, D.V.M., President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association

Chair Claborn:

[Called meeting to order.]

**Assembly Bill 173: Limits the amount of time certain heavy-duty motor vehicles
and buses may be left idling under certain circumstances. (BDR 40-201)**

Chair Claborn:

[Opened hearing on Assembly Bill 173.]

Assemblyman Hogan:

My district includes ten of the most congested miles of Interstate 15 (I-15) in Clark County. My constituents would appreciate the effort to reduce the level of air pollution near their homes and schools. From the earliest period of our national efforts to eliminate air pollution, the problem of diesel exhaust was of major concern. Diesel exhaust contains thousands of chemicals. Over 40 of these have been identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as toxic and some are labeled as human carcinogens. The particulate matter in diesel exhaust is a severe problem for asthma sufferers. In the material provided, heavy duty vehicles are shown to be substantial contributors to greenhouse gases which cause global warming.

Although progress has been made both in diesel engine design and fuel improvement, some of these measures take effect gradually. The life expectancy of a well-maintained diesel engine can extend more than thirty years. In 2005, the EPA held a series of workshops on idling reduction laws. The trucking industry had urged the EPA to address the inconsistent pattern of state and local idle restriction laws. As a result of the workshops, a model law was introduced for users of industrial trucks by the EPA. The model law is the basis for Assembly Bill 173. The proposed Nevada law follows the 2006 model law by permitting idling for five consecutive minutes and no more than 15 total minutes during a 60-minute period. Most states and localities have recently updated their idling laws to closely resemble the model law and use the five-minute limit. A handout has been provided ([Exhibit C](#)) of idling regulations in the United States.

Currently, Nevada permits idling for 15 consecutive minutes. The current language allows a driver, idling a heavy duty motor vehicle, to turn off the vehicle after 15 minutes and sit for a few minutes and turn it back on to start another consecutive 15 minutes with no restrictions. I am proposing a periodic refinement in standards which allows us to improve air quality as awareness of the idling problem spreads to the public and industries.

This new law would preserve the flexibility of our present system. The Nevada State Environmental Commission will continue to have power to grant variances from these requirements when good cause is shown. The law itself provides a list of exemptions for known circumstances that may justify longer idling time such as maintaining inside temperatures for passengers and drivers, and trucks idling during traffic delays on the highways. There are more exemptions beside these, all of which were proposed by the trucking industry and local agencies that participated in development of the model law.

Nevada's new truck and bus idling law should improve our air quality and benefit the public health. We must also minimize burdens on industries impacted by the law. However, our obligation is to find the best way to advance public health and provide clean air so Nevada can become a better place to live and visit.

In my conversations with some of the affected industries, I have received several suggestions that might provide relief for them. As part of the model law, there was mention that small operators might need financial assistance from the state to purchase the auxiliary components needed for sleeping compartments. The financial burden could be reduced if the State had some type of loan program or assistance in acquiring the units. Another suggestion is to exempt the small operators from the five-minute limit for idling when the

purpose is to cool or provide heat for the sleeping compartment. It was also suggested to make the first offense of excessive idling be a warning citation. A variation on the old law of 15 minutes will give people a chance to become aware of the change. A warning citation is an efficient way to deal with that. There will be impacts on the industry and I would be happy to meet with anyone to suggest a way to reduce or eliminate those problems.

Chair Claborn:

Are there any questions?

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

Who is going to enforce it and how?

Assemblyman Hogan:

As far as overseeing the enforcement and running the program, it will be managed as it is currently by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). There will be authority for peace officers to take action if they become aware of a violation.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

The county can put this into law in their jurisdiction through an Ordinance. I like that idea as it is their people who would be responsible for enforcement. It would be difficult for a highway patrol officer to come by, park and wait to see if a vehicle is turned off every five minutes or if it is idling for more than 15 minutes an hour. Under a county ordinance, you could put this in place through no idling zones.

Assemblyman Hogan:

The experience with the model law so far is that a number of counties and localities have exercised their option to adopt the model law or a variation of it. It may still be possible. We might need to check with counsel if we need to make any change if that is the case.

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

County ordinances have to be more restrictive. Eureka County has had an ordinance for 25 years against idling on Main Street.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Do you know if any jurisdictions have adopted something similar to this?

Assemblyman Hogan:

So far, 14 states have adopted this. In the materials provided it shows that of the 14 who have adopted the model law, 12 have adopted the five-minute

limitation. Surrounding states including Arizona have already made the model law active. We would be in line with what has been enacted by states in this area.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Do you know if the surrounding jurisdictions have made this a mandatory or voluntary compliance program?

Assemblyman Hogan:

It is a legal limit on the amount of time you may idle a motor vehicle. It is the law and is mandatory.

Assemblyman Grady:

Do you have any statistics that starting and stopping a truck every five minutes is harmful to the environment and is a hardship on equipment?

Assemblyman Hogan:

I have discussed this with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and you cannot get a uniform answer due to the different vehicles, their age, and engine size. I have not been able to find any specific scientific information on it.

Chair Claborn:

Any questions?

Assemblyman Hogan:

I would like the representative from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) to provide testimony.

**Leo Drozdoff, Administrator, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection,
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:**

We do have testimony, or I can answer the question.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Following up with the questions – does this accomplish the goal to lessen the amount of pollution emitted?

Leo Drozdoff:

Our review has been cursory over the last three days. We have considered that question and have not been able to identify any specific environmental benefit when you compare the five-minute start and stop to the 15-minute start and stop.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

It sounds like you have had only three days to review it. I am not sure how this is beneficial. It sounds like this should have been given to the Transportation Committee. I am at a loss and need to know why this is before us.

Assemblyman Hogan:

We are hoping to find specific scientific evidence to explain this. It was the decision of a large EPA effort to settle on a five-minute limit. It is difficult to support it if we do not have the science.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

Would any of those who adopted the standards have any science to back this measure?

Chair Claborn:

I am confused by this. I see your position on this is neutral, is that correct?

Leo Drozdoff:

Yes.

Chair Claborn:

I have six against the bill and one to two neutrals. Anyone who wants to speak against the bill will speak first.

Gary Wolff, Business Agent, Nevada State Law Enforcement Officers' Association:

The Association represents a wide variety of officers throughout the State. I am here to express caution about a bill like this. Clean air is important, but I have concern about enforcing these laws. The Nevada Highway Patrol and all other officers I represent have a full-time job enforcing a lot of laws. An officer would need a stop watch, to time how long a diesel truck or bus is idling. A bill like this would put a burden on law enforcement. To make idling over the allowable time limit a crime, you have to present evidence to the court to prove beyond a reasonable doubt a crime was committed. Under the bill, a violation would be a criminal act and is a misdemeanor. It would be a warning the first time, but how do we know it is the first time? There are many things that complicate this bill, and on behalf of our officers, I would recommend that you determine if this is an enforceable law.

Assemblyman Hogan:

Do the people you represent feel it would be more difficult to enforce the five-minute requirement than the 15-minute requirement?

Gary Wolff:

It is not what they have said on this bill, it is generally how they feel about most laws. The general fear is that a community in a specific area expresses strong concern over an issue, and a new law is initiated. Law enforcement resources would be devoted to address the concern and things would be good for a day or two. If the EPA has staffing to enforce the new law, that is okay with us. However, when you have officers who have to arrest criminals or attend to accidents such as on I-15, the last concern they have would be a vehicle polluting the air by idling longer than allowed. How do you enforce this?

Assemblyman Goicoechea:

These guys do not ride in these trucks unless they have to. Let us face the fact that fuel is \$3.50.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

I understand the issues enforcing the law, but are you suggesting that if the limit of the law was 15 minutes, it would be less an issue?

Gary Wolff:

The issue is the time spent and the need for a stop watch. If I write you a ticket for speeding, I have to go to a judge and prove that you were driving over the speed limit. There has to be some way of measuring time and an officer would have to sit and watch the vehicle. There is no one who has the time to measure this. EPA may have that time, but law enforcement does not. I am not opposed to the bill, but someone has to have the time to enforce it.

Assemblyman Carpenter:

Are they enforcing the 15-minute rule?

Gary Wolff:

They probably are in some area of enforcement. When you are specifically assigned to a task you have to do it. But if there is a specific area, as on I-15 where there is a problem with smog, it is a concern. In Reno, if you get behind a bus you have exhaust pouring out on you. That is a violation of smog and smoke laws, but does not get enforced.

Paul Enos, Chief Executive Officer, Nevada Motor Transport Association:

I am here to speak in opposition of the bill. We have talked with Mr. Hogan and we appreciate his mentioning some of the problems we have with the bill such as the lack of a financial assistance program as is contained in the EPA model. When you have an owner/operator who might clear \$30,000 a year, \$7,000 to \$10,000 for an auxiliary power unit which his truck can run on, instead of idling, is a big investment. One of the keys with the EPA model that was

adopted in April of last year was the financial assistance from the states. I would be happy to work with Assemblyman Hogan concerning Nevada administering a pilot program for financial assistance. That is the first step that we might want to take. One of the issues we have had with idling laws across the country is the lack of uniformity. The EPA model is trying to address that. The EPA model allows only five minutes so there is not the problem of starting and stopping. Assemblyman Grady, Assemblyman Ohrenschall and Assemblyman Atkinson asked Assemblyman Hogan about the science behind this and if there was any evidence that shows there is an environmental benefit or that you are going to have less emission.

On Monday, the American Transportation Research Institute decided to do a study to compare the emissions put out when idling as opposed to starting and stopping. They will need to investigate different engines and different manufacturers to get the scientific evidence. The trucking industry cares about clean air too, and has been subjected to new rules regarding ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel which is taking the amount of sulfur in the air down from 500 parts per million to 15 parts per million. This is having an impact on the drivers and trucks. It has increased the cost of diesel from five to 15 cents a gallon. Truck companies are investing in auxiliary power units so their vehicles do not have to idle in truck stops. Truck stops are providing electrification and centralized air so trucks do not have to idle their engine in the summer or winter. They will only have to attach a pipe with centralized heat or air to make the cab a comfortable place. The trucking industry as whole is looking at this and is working with EPA on the model legislation. We can learn from mistakes made by other states' who have adopted the EPA model.

Chair Claborn:

So what you are saying is we need to learn to crawl before we walk?

Paul Enos:

We do have to take baby steps at this point. I do appreciate Assemblyman Hogan's willingness to work with us, and he did mention some of the concerns we had. I would work with him on a pilot project to enable the industry to install auxiliary power units.

Assemblyman Grady:

For the people you represent, refrigeration is part of the unit; would they be affected by this law?

Paul Enos:

I have not had any direct contact with members who have the units but can get back to you after I have talked with them.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

Does this include the greyhound buses at the bus station?

Paul Enos:

Yes. That is the case, the bill includes any vehicle over 8,500 pounds.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

Would it include any bus with people waiting for more passengers?

Paul Enos:

Yes. Assemblyman Hogan did put some exemptions in the bill for buses so they may idle for a maximum of 15 consecutive minutes or a total of 60 minutes to maintain passenger comfort while passengers are boarding.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

You said you would have information on what Mr. Ohrenschall, Mr. Grady, and I asked – did you say when?

Paul Enos:

The American Transportation Research Association, the research arm of the American Trucking Associations, decided this week that they are going to look at the environmental benefits of idling. I talked to them about starting and stopping of vehicles. They said it will be something they will include in their study. I cannot tell you how long the study will take, but it is included as part of their research program.

Assemblyman Carpenter:

Two questions. The 8,500 pound vehicle limit would seem to include a lot of those diesel pickups, is that correct?

Paul Enos:

Yes it would. It would include some of your larger pick-ups. The definition for commercial motor vehicles as stated in the EPA law and also in Nevada, is defined at 26,000 pounds and up.

Assemblyman Carpenter:

Do you have any results or surveys from things happening in the last two years like newer engines or different fuels? Is there any research on what can cut down on smog?

Paul Enos:

The ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel has taken the amount of sulfur from 500 parts per million down to 15 parts per million. It is at a cost to the industry and includes the cost of new equipment and fuel. In some cases, it is a 15 cent increase for fuel. There have been some environmental benefits from the regulations established toward the industry, however, it is a cost the industry bears which unfortunately results in an increase in cost of the goods they transport.

Assemblyman Carpenter:

Are there any studies that show these requirements are helping the air?

Paul Enos:

According to the American Trucking Associations, there is a benefit to running your truck for five minutes instead of 15. Their issue with the bill is the starting and stopping where a vehicle can idle for a total of 15 minutes in an hour, but only for five consecutive minutes at a time.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

I had been told the EPA recommended a model legislation which exempted some of the newer, cleaner burning engines.

Paul Enos:

They exempted the 2007 engines because they are finding them to be cleaner burning. That is not contained in the bill. What we have seen in this bill is that it does not match up with any of the idling regulations throughout the country, especially the EPA model.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Is the rationale for exempting the new engines, because they are cleaner burning?

Paul Enos:

That is the case. The manufacturers are getting to the point where they are getting rid of so much particulate matter that the engine can actually clean the area.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

With the newer, cleaner burning engines, how long do you think the newer engines will be in place?

Paul Enos:

It is hard to determine. It depends on when the vehicles are replaced by the operator.

Gary Milliken, GEM Consulting, Representing the Association of Contractors, Las Vegas Chapter, Nevada:

I talked with Assemblyman Hogan when the bill first came out and would like to know how this applies to construction sites. I do not have an answer to that.

Chair Claborn:

I do not know either.

Gary Milliken:

I would just like a clarification on how it applies to construction sites.

Assemblyman Atkinson:

You obviously have a concern with that; can we hear what it is?

Gary Milliken:

On construction sites, and at the city center, engines and equipment idle when pouring concrete. Twenty to 25 concrete trucks could be lined up. They could idle for five to 25 minutes. I want to know how this fits into the bill.

Chair Claborn:

I was going to ask the same question.

Assemblyman Marvel:

The resolution to this is to not pass the bill.

Gary Milliken:

That is a decision of the Committee.

Russell Fields, President, Nevada Mining Association:

We, too, had an opportunity to speak with Assemblyman Hogan, and we appreciate what he has tried to do with the exemption and special conditions. The mining industry does not fit well into this bill, and like Mr. Milliken, I would like to know how this fits into our industry. The metal mining operations are in rural remote areas of northern Nevada, hundreds of miles away from urban centers, and we want to do our part in promoting clean air. We have equipment whose tires are more than the weight limit put in the bill. It is all heavy-duty equipment; for example, some of our trucks are running with a payload capacity of 450 tons. This requires a very sophisticated machine that operates on diesel fuel. Diesel is our second largest expense at the mining operation, second only

to human resources. We are watching the fuel very closely at these operations and there is no waste going on. Idling takes place at the mining operations when we change a work shift during our 24 hours a day, seven days a week operations. An operator comes down off his vehicle, and the next operator does an inspection and safety check while the vehicle stays hot. We work in locations at high elevations where it is cold and we do not turn the machines off. We question the benefits and problems with starting and stopping an engine of this size. In the large open pit mines, these heavy trucks line up to be filled by a heavy-duty loader or shovel. Sometimes they can be waiting in queue for five minutes or more. As it is written now, it would impact us and if so, we oppose the bill.

Chair Claborn:

Any questions? [There were none.]

Dylan Shaver, Nevada Petroleum Marketers Association:

We have one concern in addition to the issues previously expressed. Some of our members are fleet fuelers who use a small version of the big tanker trucks you see on the highway. We would want to be sure they are covered in the bill.

Chair Claborn:

Any questions? [There were none.]

Jack Jeffrey, Southern Nevada Building and Construction Trades Council:

I have been in communication with three teamster's locals in Las Vegas, Local 14, Local 995 and Local 631. They are involved in various aspects of transportation in Clark County and are all opposed to the bill. One of the business agents in Local 14 said there is a study that shows that starting and stopping every five minutes does not benefit the environment. I do not know the source, but could check it out. As far as the buses are concerned, they stay on the project in remote locations, and have to be ready to go when the workers get off shift. It will be a burden on the industry. Also, the starting and stopping is hard on engines.

Chair Claborn:

Any questions? [There were none.]

Liz Sorenson, Lobbyist, Communications Workers of America, Local #9413, Nevada:

I put myself down in opposition to this, but I have more concerns than opposition. I represent technicians in the telecommunications industry and the vehicles they use are over the 8,500 pound limit. I go on the record to express

concern as to how the bill will impact the people I represent. I was hoping to see the data that it did have an impact on the air, but we did not get that today.

Chair Claborn:

Any questions? [There were none] Is there anyone who would like to testify as neutral?

Leo Drozdoff:

It is important to point out that there is scientific information that continues to come forward about the negative health effects associated with diesel emissions. In 2007, EPA is scheduled to look at heavy-duty trucks and buses to make them run cleaner. Beginning with the 2007 model year, pollution from heavy-duty highway vehicles will be reduced by more than 90 percent. That is based on EPA estimates. A large component of that is the ultra-low sulfur diesel that has been mentioned. While that is good, the turnover in the fleet will take years, if not decades.

NDEP is a voting member of the advisory committee on the control of emissions from motor vehicles. This advisory committee is required by statute under *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 445B.830 and is defined further by regulation under *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC) 445B.850-445B.857. The committee consists of 11 members representing DMV, NDEP, Clark and Washoe counties, NDOT, the Department of Agriculture, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency and a non-voting member from the EPA. On October 5, 2006, the committee looked at the model state idling law on which Assembly Bill 173 was based. Specifically, national application of the model law was identified as a benefit to the trucking industry so there would be a consistent set of rules in all states. During the forum, as discussion unfolded, the Nevada Motor Transport Association noted that another association of motor transport partners representing nine western states was aware that in the near future, the Multi-State Highway Transportation Agreement (MHTA) would include provisions regarding the model law. The advisory committee, of which NDEP is a member, agreed by consensus, to table pursuit of the model law until the MHTA could further discuss how the model could be applied in the west. We have begun to contact members of that advisory committee to continue discussions on this bill. Nevada's current regulation, *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC) 445B.576(4), limits idling of diesel trucks or buses to no more than 15 consecutive minutes. This bill is drafted to restrict idling of a heavy-duty diesel vehicle or bus for more than five consecutive minutes, three times in an hour, or no more than 15 minutes in a 60-minute period. Although we continue to look, thus far we have not identified any environmental benefit from changing the standard. Questions were raised with regard to the bolt-on devices, to NDEP as to whether or not the State Environmental Commission has approved

any pollution control devices, and the short answer is no. However, the U.S. EPA has pursued diesel retrofit technologies as a priority in the past, and is actively working to develop solutions on improving emissions. Therefore, NDEP, if it came to it, would work with the State Environmental Commission to review the U.S. EPA's list of approved retrofit devices. We are neutral on the bill, but commit to work with anyone interested in developing a pilot retrofit program or to have other discussions.

Chair Claborn:
Any questions?

Assemblyman Bobzien:

This bill has brought forth the issue that diesel emission is a problem, and looking at pilot projects and ways to assist the industry with new technologies is a good direction. The question I have with the EPA standard and the deliberation behind it, is that it does get hot in Washoe County too, not just in Clark County. I have a problem with the standard they came up with. There does not appear to be any regional variability that went into that recommendation. From an agency standpoint, what are your thoughts if different durations and climates are taken into consideration?

Leo Drozdoff:

You are correct; there was not specific consideration given to regional climates. That is what made the Multi-State Highway Transportation Agreement (MHTA), different. There were nine western states and we are curious to see where that falls.

Colleen Cripps, Ph.D., Deputy Administrator, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:

There are exemptions built into EPA's model law for idling and using HVAC systems. There is some accommodation there.

Chair Claborn:

Any more questions or testimony? [There were none. Closes hearing on Assembly Bill 173.]

We are now going to have a presentation from Boyd Spratling, President of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association.

Mike Montero, Lobbyist, Nevada Cattlemen's Association:

I am the lobbyist for the Nevada Cattlemen's Association. It is my pleasure to introduce the President of the Nevada Cattlemen's Association, Boyd Spratling.

Boyd M. Spratling, D.V.M., President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association:

[Presentation and Nevada Cattlemen's Association Report to Legislature, March 7, 2007 ([Exhibit D](#)).]

Agriculture does not garner a lot of recognition, and as Nevada has become a more urban state we have neglected the opportunity to share with our urban neighbors what we do, and what impact we have on the State. By enlarge, information presented is negative toward agriculture. I come here today to try to change that perception.

Ranching in Nevada is in a difficult situation compared to other states. About 11 percent of Nevada lands are privately owned with the remaining being public land. Agriculture in our state is primarily high quality alfalfa production that is grown, distributed and exported. The remainder of production in the State is in the form of grass hay harvested on native meadows. These areas are special places with many being in private ownership. Many refer to these areas as wetlands, but I refer to them as wet-grass production areas that provide a unique habitat for livestock, wildlife and people. These native meadows are an important part of our industry and is the basis for agriculture. They provide a natural water filter, deter flooding, and have become concentrated wildlife habitat areas. There is no deep plowing of the soil in the native meadows and natural water filtering absorbs energy to prevent flooding. In the Great Basin, there is a unique situation. We are a high, dry, cold desert. Our snow pack runoff supplies water to the meadows throughout the state. Meadows are concentrated habitats where there is an abundance of feed and water. We have production and wildlife together. People say you cannot have production and wildlife, but through ranching you can. The native meadows also act as fire barriers and provide a transition habitat for wildlife movement corridors and fawning grounds.

Everything we do has an impact. We can see positive and negative results from every action. Introduction of non-native species, rainbow, brook, and brown trout has had an impact on native fish. Improper grazing has been an impact for decades. Removing fire from the equation through proper fire management and inaction has impacts. If we fail to deal with the natural succession of the ecosystem, we will face consequences. For example, a long-standing family ranch was sold by the private owner, and after the sale it became a blue ribbon fishery which changed the original function of promoting agriculture. Because downstream irrigation ceased, the total acres of meadow decreased dramatically. We have a fantastic fishery, but other wildlife has suffered. All natural resources have a balance sheet that must be reconciled.

Agriculture's contributions include sustainable open space through a family owned ranch. Expansion of wet-grass areas benefit wildlife. Is there value to keeping open space? We believe so. Another contribution is protection of rangeland health through short duration grazing and water development. Tax revenue, and employment of families, and contributions to local economies also are positive trade-offs.

Livestock provides contribution to our economy. In 2004 there were 240,000 head of cattle; however sheep became nearly non-existent with only 30,000. A study conducted by the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) on agriculture, found its value to the economy is \$68 Animal Units per month (AUM), which provides property tax revenues and employment to families.

Agriculture in relation to the ranching family and culture is important in preserving the continuation of a long-standing industry. A true land ethic is the decision to keep a ranch for another generation and to commit to living a modest lifestyle. Threats abound to deteriorate family and culture, and preservation of the family ranch is the greatest single ally of a true resource advocate. It is important not to diminish the resource management done by corporate ranches, but it is economically motivated. Family ranches have economic motivation, but they also possess a true land ethic. The wildfire threat is an issue where suppression costs millions of dollars. Reduction of the risks is needed in the management of fuels. How are we going to sustain these values? Economically viable ranches in the Great Basin are a combination of public and private lands. If one is removed, the entire enterprise is at a higher risk of failure. Perhaps we need to consider sustainability when making grazing decisions. What will decisions on public land do to the future of resource-rich private lands? I am not advocating poor management on public lands in any way. Ranches are at a higher risk for development once it is no longer family-owned. Some say zoning is the answer, but more regulation seldom solves problems and adds complications. Decisions must be made using good science, performance based incentives, and determined problem solving. Single-minded agendas such as removal of all grazing from public lands are not in the best interest of communities or society in general. We have to resist the hands-off approach to land management.

Chair Claborn:

Are there any questions?

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Does the Cattlemen's Association have a position on the Clark County water issue?

Boyd Spratling:

Yes, we are opposed to it. The trade-off in drying up the watershed and decreasing wetlands will have a devastating impact on the environment and landscape.

Assemblyman Ohrenschall:

Is the Association opposed to the entire policy or parts of it?

Boyd Spratling:

We are opposed to inter-local transfers.

Chair Claborn:

Any further comments or testimony? [There were none.]

Meeting adjourned [at 3:11 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sherrada Fielder
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining

Date: March 7, 2007

Time of Meeting: 1:30 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
***	A	*****	Agenda
***	B	*****	Attendance Roster
A.B. 173	C	Assemblyman Joseph Hogan	Information Papers on Heavy-Duty Vehicles
***	D	Boyd M. Spratling, D.V.M., President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association	Presentation Talking Points