

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Seventy-Eighth Session  
February 20, 2015**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chairman John Ellison at 8:37 a.m. on Friday, February 20, 2015, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 31, Griswold Hall, University of Nevada School of Medicine, 735 Walnut Street, Elko, 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/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015). In addition, copies of the audio or video of the meeting may be purchased, for personal use only, through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: [publications@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:publications@lcb.state.nv.us); telephone: 775-684-6835).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman John Ellison, Chairman  
Assemblyman John Moore, Vice Chairman  
Assemblyman Richard Carrillo  
Assemblywoman Victoria A. Dooling  
Assemblyman Edgar Flores  
Assemblywoman Amber Joiner  
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford  
Assemblywoman Dina Neal  
Assemblywoman Shelly M. Shelton  
Assemblyman Stephen H. Silberkraus  
Assemblywoman Ellen B. Spiegel  
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart  
Assemblyman Glenn E. Trowbridge  
Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None



**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Ira Hansen, Assembly District No. 32  
Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Assembly District No. 16

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst  
Eileen O'Grady, Committee Counsel  
Erin Barlow, Committee Secretary  
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Kay A. Scherer, Deputy Director, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Bob Roper, State Forester Firewarden, Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Robert K. Stokes, County Manager, Elko County  
John Wagner, State Chairman, Independent American Party of Nevada  
Pete Anderson, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada  
Gary Zunino, Fire Administrator, Elko County Fire Protection District  
Mel Hummel, Chairman, Wildfire Support Group, Inc., Winnemucca, Nevada  
Jan Schade, Member, Wildfire Support Group, Inc., Winnemucca, Nevada  
Mary Walker, representing Lyon County and Storey County  
Jeff Fontaine, Executive Director, Nevada Association of Counties  
Alex Tanchek, representing the Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
Bryan L. Stockton, Senior Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General  
Christopher B. Smith, Chief, Office of Homeland Security, Division of Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety  
Bob Crowell, Mayor, Carson City  
Nick Marano, City Manager, Carson City

**Chairman Ellison:**

We are going to take a few things out of order because we have some people who need to be in other committees. Everybody, please go to the work session documents. We are going to do Assembly Bill 123.

**Assembly Bill 123**: Designates the square dance as the official dance of the State of Nevada. (BDR 19-677)

**Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst:**

[Mr. McDonald reviewed the work session document ([Exhibit C](#)).] Assembly Bill 123 designates the square dance as the official state dance of the state of Nevada and was heard in this Committee on February 18.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Comments? Discussion? [There was none.] Would somebody like to make a motion?

ASSEMBLYMAN SILBERKRAUS MOVED TO DO PASS  
ASSEMBLY BILL 123.

ASSEMBLYMAN STEWART SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMAN MUNFORD WAS  
ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

At this point in time, we are going to Assembly Bill 163.

**Assembly Bill 163**: Provides for the creation of rangeland fire protection associations. (BDR 42-43)

**Assemblyman Ira Hansen, Assembly District No. 32:**

I represent District 32. District 32 is almost 38,000 square miles and includes seven different Nevada counties. One of the big issues there is fires. As you know, Nevada is blessed with vast areas of public land. One of the biggest threats to our state's public land is wildfire. This legislation would allow the state and counties to enter into agreements with nonprofit organizations consisting of rangeland agricultural producers or landowners that were created with the purpose to engage in initial fire response. With respect to the bill, since most fire protection activities occur at the local level, county boards of commissioners will be authorized to approve a petition by interested groups to create a rangeland fire protection association (RFPA). [Assemblyman Hansen continued to read from ([Exhibit D](#)).]

We have the State Forester Firewarden here today, and as you all know from working on your own bills, when these things come up there are all sorts of interesting, unexpected angles. We have been working in a very friendly fashion with several different counties, fire associations, state fire people, the

Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior (BLM) to get all these issues resolved. Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony on this bill.

**Assemblyman Trowbridge:**

Does each county have a chief fire protection officer or professional fire protection leader?

**Assemblyman Hansen:**

I do not know the answer to that. We have the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) here; they could probably answer that. We have several people coming up who can testify and answer that question for you.

**Assemblywoman Spiegel:**

Do the people who would be part of these associations going in and fighting fires get any kind of workers' compensation benefits through that association if they get injured, or any other kinds of protections?

**Assemblyman Hansen:**

I do not know. I know there are people who are coming up who can probably address that.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Any other questions? [There were none.] Those in favor?

**Kay A. Scherer, Deputy Director, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:**

First, on the behalf of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, I want to express our department's support for this bill and extend our appreciation to the sponsor for asking us to work with him on this legislation. I want to relay that the Governor views this as a legislative priority and a very important element in an integrated approach to sage grouse habitat protection. The single greatest threat to the sage grouse is wildland fire, and this bill will give the state another important tool to address this threat. [Ms. Scherer continued to read from ([Exhibit E](#)).]

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

I noticed there is a fiscal note on this for the state. I would like you to go into the fact that additional personnel might need to be hired and exactly what the cost might be. If you would like to make the testimony first, that is fine with me.

**Kay Scherer:**

I am not aware of a state fiscal note that has been put on that. We will look into it. That was not added by our department, and we have done a careful analysis and determined that we will not be asking for any additional resources in order to run rangeland fire protection associations, both with personnel or any other fiscal resources. We believe we can handle it within our current structure, especially for fiscal year 2016-2017.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

That is good to hear.

**Bob Roper, State Forester Firewarden, Division of Forestry, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:**

I am your new State Forester Firewarden for the Division of Forestry. I am here to testify this morning in support of Assembly Bill 163. Assembly Bill 163 provides a new tool in preventing, reporting, and controlling incipient stage wildland fires by creating rangeland fire protection associations. [Mr. Roper continued to read from ([Exhibit F](#)).] The formation of the RFPAs is strictly voluntary and the concept is similar to RFPAs in neighboring states.

**Assemblywoman Spiegel:**

It sounds like you have experience with these types of associations. What incentive is there for private entities to be forming these associations? Do the people who are in these associations and who go out and fight fires get any kind of workers' compensation benefits if they are injured?

**Bob Roper:**

In areas of the state that may be more rural and remote than other areas, when a fire happens or a dry lightning storm comes through, an interested party or member of the RFPa may notice and know exactly where that fire started. That might be the best person to go out and stop the fire in its incipient stage. If they did not have that capability, they would call 911. It may take a long time to get the message out, get resources assembled, and have those resources put out the fire. During that time, the fire may have grown exponentially. Private property owners, cattle ranchers, mines, or utility companies have a vested interest in keeping the fire small to limit the damage to their incomes.

Workers' compensation, by the models that we have studied, is addressed during the formation of the RFPa itself. It is strictly voluntary, and the organization would discuss how they would address workers' compensation. At this time we are not proposing for them to be an agent of the state and for the state to have that type of liability.

**Assemblywoman Spiegel:**

If I understand correctly, we are also not requiring that these associations provide workers' compensation benefits to the firefighters, as I know many volunteer fire departments have.

**Bob Roper:**

That is not part of what we are looking at right now. What you have before you is the enabling legislation that would allow us to meet with stakeholders and create the specific regulations in the *Nevada Administrative Code* to detail all specific items like liability, workers' compensation, and so forth.

**Chairman Ellison:**

A question that will probably come up later is workers' compensation. But one of the most important facts is that the first responder is the one that might have the best control of the fire. If you have ranchers right there and there is a lighting strike, they might be able to maintain that fire range up to an acre. We have seen fires that could not be immediately addressed that have turned into thousands and thousands of acres that have killed cattle, deer, and horses. The fires can be massive. I think this is a great bill for that reason. We have to get people on the ground and get them moving quickly.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

On page 2, line 5, it says that a RFPA is "a nonprofit unincorporated association." What is that? You are creating a nonprofit, but it is unincorporated? How can it not be a corporation?

**Bob Roper:**

I do not have a specific answer to give you on the legalese of that. I will be happy to get back to you.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

I did not know who to ask the question to.

**Chairman Ellison:**

I know we have some people in Elko who want to speak. We will take these two testimonies, then go to Elko. Is Elko testifying in favor, opposition, or neutral?

**Robert K. Stokes, County Manager, Elko County:**

We do have some comments in favor with a few issues that we would like to bring up.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Okay. We will bring you up in a few minutes.

**John Wagner, State Chairman, Independent American Party of Nevada:**

I have a statement here that was sent to every one of you members from Janine Hansen. She could not attend today, so I would like to read this. [Mr. Wagner read from ([Exhibit G](#)).] "In addition, there was a mobile home fire one-half mile from my home last year which could have easily started another rangeland fire but for the quick response of the fire fighters." She has a typo here, "AB 165" should be A.B. 163. "A.B. 163 is in the great American tradition of neighbors helping neighbors." [Mr. Wagner continued to read from ([Exhibit G](#)).]

As for my own testimony, I support this bill as well. We support this bill, and we believe that neighbors helping neighbors is always good. They are right there on the scene; they do not have to wait. You can call 911, and that is fine. You should probably do that anyway as you are running to put the fire out. But sometimes, if you wait too long, the fire spreads too much. I agree with the Governor on this, one of the few things where I agree with him. We do want to protect our wildlife as well as our cattle and sheep and the other animals that are out there. I believe this is a good bill, and I encourage you to support it.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Any questions from the Committee? [There were none.]

**Pete Anderson, Private Citizen, Carson City:**

I am a retired state forester from the Nevada Division of Forestry. I am here today in support of A.B. 163. [Mr. Anderson continued to read from ([Exhibit H](#)).] While the Wildfire Support Group has successfully and effectively performed "initial attack" of wildfire ignitions for over ten years with BLM support, issues surfaced in 2013 regarding authorization for their service. Passage of A.B. 163 will allow for the formation of RFPAs, thus strengthening our capabilities to more readily suppress wildfire ignitions and reduce the wildfire threat to critical wildlife habitat for the greater sage grouse. [Mr. Anderson continued to read from ([Exhibit H](#)).]

**Chairman Ellison:**

There is a large study on the ecosystem, and they came back with great findings on how to handle a lot of this. Have you read that or been involved with that?

**Pete Anderson:**

Yes, I have. I have engaged in activities of sagebrush ecosystem management and hopefully there are some solutions going forward.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Did you want to talk about that? We are not going to keep the sage grouse off the endangered species list if we keep destroying their habitat.

**Pete Anderson:**

That is correct. Habitat loss is probably the single most impactful element of this time period. In Nevada, wildfire, the spread of noxious weeds, and invasive species are the three hurdles we face. Any steps we take in the manner of this bill certainly help us reduce the size and magnitude of wildfires.

**Assemblyman Trowbridge:**

Does each county have a leader in charge of fire protection that would be categorized as a professional firefighter?

**Pete Anderson:**

We have 17 very varied counties. We have counties that are highly sophisticated and fully equipped in all manner in respect to emergency response. We have counties that depend totally on volunteer fire departments. Every county has certain levels of capabilities, either through emergency management response or volunteer fire departments. I would answer that, yes, our counties all have some level of professional fire service dealing with protecting their citizens.

**Assemblyman Trowbridge:**

In those counties that have varying levels of sophistication, the county commission has to rely very heavily on the State Forester Firewarden. Do the requirements for State Forester Firewarden require that individual to be a professional firefighter?

**Pete Anderson:**

The way this bill is proposed, we are basically authorizing a process to develop an RFPA. The specifics or the components of each of those will be developed through a regulation process and the *Nevada Administrative Code*. At this point, we are looking at an umbrella approach and getting authorization in place. Then we will be able to work out the specifics. I would say that every county is going to be different as far as their RFPA, and you are going to have nuances specific to each county.



**Assemblyman Trowbridge:**

My question is regarding the qualifications to be the State Forester Firewarden. Is that individual required to be a professional firefighter?

**Pete Anderson:**

The Division of Forestry in the state of Nevada is focused on wildland fire suppression, and if fully adopted, all the standards and qualifications of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group would be fully complied with, if they are responding to a wildland fire. They are not all-risk firemen. They are professional wildland fire suppression individuals that meet those qualifications and standards.

**Rob Stokes:**

Although we have not taken this to the full Elko County Board of Commissioners, we are supportive of A.B. 163. We look at it as an additional tool to be utilized in wildfire support, protection, and response. However, we do have a few questions and comments.

**Gary Zunino, Fire Administrator, Elko County Fire Protection District:**

I am here to testify regarding the concerns Elko County has about A.B. 163. The Board of Commissioners, as Mr. Stokes has indicated, has not reviewed this bill, and these comments are based solely from my review. The Elko County Fire Protection District fully supports efforts to increase the number of firefighting resources to extinguish wildland fires. Assembly Bill 163, on first take, appears to work towards enhancing those firefighting resources. However, there are several sections of the bill that may not meet the needs of the local fire district as it is written. The majority of my concerns are in section 3 and are specifically regarding training and qualifications, procuring funding, liability insurance, and financial requirements of the RFPAs. [Mr. Zunino continued to read from ([Exhibit I](#)).]

**Chairman Ellison:**

Did you get to hear the testimony by Assemblyman Hansen and some of the changes they might be submitting that would answer a lot of those questions?

**Gary Zunino:**

I did hear the initial presentation by Assemblyman Hansen.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Could you get with Assemblyman Hansen on that also, and then maybe get a copy of the discussion to us?

**Gary Zunino:**

Yes, sir.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Were you going to put that in as an amendment?

**Gary Zunino:**

We are still evaluating our options and our process.

**Assemblywoman Spiegel:**

You mentioned that there are 15 volunteer fire departments in Elko. What happens if one of the members of those volunteer fire departments gets injured while fighting a fire? Do they get workers' compensation benefits or other benefits to help them get better?

**Gary Zunino:**

Yes, that is correct. Members who are in good standing with all 15 volunteer fire departments that are incorporated nonprofits within Elko County are covered by Elko County. We pay for their workers' compensation insurance if they are injured on a fire.

**Assemblywoman Spiegel:**

Great. As you read this, do you think that the folks who would be in these RFPAs should also have similar kinds of benefits? Is that something that you have been able to contemplate as you have been reading the bill?

**Gary Zunino:**

Firefighting is inherently dangerous, and my opinion is that yes, people who are actively taking part in fire suppression need to be covered if they are injured out there. How that coverage happens is a concern.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

Mr. Zunino seemed to be concerned that this new organization would possibly be in conflict with the local volunteer departments. Could the State Forester Firewarden answer? Do you see that as an issue?

**Bob Roper:**

I do not see it as a direct issue. I do understand what he is talking about, and we would get a stakeholders' group together to work out the actual regulations on how these groups would be formed and operated. Whatever we have on the scene of any fire, we want to make sure it is clearly coordinated so that there is no conflict, and we have to just make sure that is all arranged in the program when we form the regulations.

**Assemblywoman Joiner:**

I definitely see the need for this. I have friends and family in rural areas, and I think this is a good idea. I am looking at page 2, line 31 of the bill, which talks about the adequacy of liability insurance, and again on page 3 there is another reference to liability insurance on line 18 regarding the regulations. I just want to make sure that that could not be zero, that we have some standard that there will be liability insurance and that there will be some form of workers' compensation. Those are my main concerns, and I think with a little cleanup that might be clearer. My question for Legal would be that perhaps there are other parts of the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) where that is already required. I want to make sure that is a discussion on the table.

**Mel Hummel, Chairman, Wildfire Support Group Inc., Winnemucca, Nevada:**

I do not live in an area that has any fire protection. We are out of any rural fire area. Ranchers in Nevada have traditionally gone to fight the fire with their neighbors if there is a one in the locale. We formed this group in the early 2000s with support from the BLM, and we worked really well with the BLM for a number of years. When we were on fires with the BLM, we were basically assistants by hire. We were under their insurance just while on the fire. When we had to go out of their jurisdiction and form our own entity as a nonprofit, we were out of insurance there too. That is an important factor here, and something that needs to be worked out later on. I support this bill 100 percent.

**Chairman Ellison:**

I have been there, done that on fires out at the ranch. Tell me, if you do not hit the ground running trying to fight that fire, how far would it spread and how fast?

**Mel Hummel:**

I can tell you a true story. In 2013, when the BLM told us we could not fight fires anymore, there was a fire across the valley in the checkerboard lands, so it was part private and part BLM lands. I asked the BLM Field Management Officer three times: can we go to that fire because it is on our side of the mountain? There were no personnel on that fire. He told me three times, no, you are not authorized. In four hours, that fire went from 5,000 acres to 15,000 acres. It burned up the last sage grouse habitat on that mountain. I know that we could have put it out because when I asked him at 5:30 a.m. to 6 a.m., it was cool and the fire was laying low. Two or three people could have put our side of the mountain out and saved 5,000 to 6,000 acres of sage grouse habitat.

I do not know how many countless fires we have gone to over the years that are half-acre, three-quarters of an acre. Three people with shovels could have

taken care of it with no problem at all. Now, if you wait and call the BLM, you sometimes wait three days if there are a lot of fires. Their standard protocol, which is the right way, is to have all their personnel go to the first call. When they put that fire out, then they can go to the next fire. Well, the next fire might be way bigger than the first one they were on before they ever get to that next one. We look forward to working with the Nevada Division of Forestry on this. I think this is the right way to go. [Also provided an overview of the Winnemucca Wildfire Support Group ([Exhibit J](#)).]

**Chairman Ellison:**

I agree, first responders are always the best. I have been there. In Elko we had a fire lane down one night and tried to get everybody out with equipment, and they did not do it, and the equipment was sitting there. That fire burned all the way into Elko and almost to Carlin and back around to the north. It is amazing how fast that fire got out of control. We are lucky we did not lose a lot of houses or a life. I know there are thousands of stories out there, and it is devastating.

**Jan Schade, Member, Wildfire Support Group Inc., Winnemucca, Nevada:**

I am a member of the Winnemucca Wildfire Support Group. About 14 years ago a group of us, many of us ranchers, teamed up with the BLM to help fight wildfires primarily in initial attack. The BLM trained us and certified us as firefighters. Our group not only watched over their own range, but their neighbor's range as well, totaling two million acres that were looked over and watched. One thing about the Wildfire Support Group is that when the BLM brings in resources either on standby or sends them out in a watch out situation, they have to pay these people. They pay them pretty good dollars. One big benefit to these RFPAs is that these groups are not costing the taxpayers anything for being out there watching these fires and having their equipment and resources ready to respond. That is another fringe benefit of these groups.

Over the years, the Wildfire Support Group has responded to literally hundreds of wildfires and has greatly reduced the spread of wildfire in our area. Now we find our efforts being canceled, not having a state law to support us. We are being restricted. Each year, wildfire damages add to the prior year's damage, and devastation of Nevada lands, with little to no recovery. It is actually growing like a cancer. We are now losing the battle for our state's precious land and resources. This bill will allow Nevadans to step up to help in the battle against wildfires that keep destroying our state's precious rangelands and habitat, including the mule deer and sage grouse. I look forward to working with our State Firewarden in the future.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Any questions from the Committee? [There were none.]

**Mary Walker, representing Lyon County and Storey County:**

We do rise in support of A.B. 163. We support the concept; however, we do have a friendly amendment ([Exhibit K](#)), which we submitted. The reason for the amendment is that in many areas of rural Nevada and in many counties, it is actually not the counties who provide fire service, nor do they employ professional fire chiefs. It is actually the county fire protection districts created under NRS Chapter 474, which have been established to provide for fire protection within that county. I will use Storey County or Lyon County as an example. In Lyon County, there are four fire protection districts within the county. What we would like in our amendment is to recognize that, in those jurisdictions where there is a fire district, these associations would not go to the county but would actually go to the 474 fire district board. In many of the counties, these are separately elected bodies. They are elected separately from the county commission.

I think one of our concerns is that if we do not align the responsibilities to the correct jurisdictions and the correct political bodies, you are going to have a lot of cross-jurisdictional problems in trying to implement this. Some examples are a county trying to tell a separate elected board what they are going to do, or a separate elected board trying to tell the county what they are going to do. The intent of the amendment we have proposed is that these associations and the requirements of the State Forester Firewarden all be coordinated through the 474 district for the area within their boundaries. The area outside their boundaries would go to the county.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Have you met with Assemblyman Hansen on this?

**Mary Walker:**

Yes, we have. This is a friendly amendment. They agree in concept. We also met with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the State Forester Firewarden, and they agree with the concept. We do need to fine-tune the language a little bit, but that is the concept. I believe the amendment is in the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS).

**Chairman Ellison:**

Yes. There are not a lot of fire districts out there like this. Is that correct?

**Mary Walker:**

You have two in Washoe County, two in Douglas County, and four in Lyon County. I believe Eureka County's department went from being under NRS Chapter 473 to being under NRS 474. White Pine County went from a 473 to a 474 district, and also Elko is a 474 district now. All this does is just align the jurisdictional responsibilities in the right jurisdiction.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

I am reading the amendment. How many counties right now have the ability to handle fire?

**Mary Walker:**

To my knowledge, in most of the rural counties, it is not the county that actually provides the fire service. It is actually the 474 fire district. In the cities, of course, it is the city that handles fire service, for the most part. Fernley does not provide fire service. But for the most part, cities do within their jurisdictions.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

So if the board of county commissioners is cited, on page 3, lines 1 through 8. In your amendment ([Exhibit K](#)), you are just adding "or the governing body of an NRS 474 Fire District." If they are the ones being asked to assist the association in carrying out duties, training members of the association, and providing personal protective equipment, what are the issues or flaws that we are going to encounter with having a board of county commissioners responsible for that? Should that language be struck out? Since there are more 474 fire districts, should more duties and responsibilities be under them? They seem to have the money, the capability, and the ability to train.

**Mary Walker:**

That is part of the language change we are going to have to make. The board of county commissioners is responsible for the areas that are outside of the 474 fire district. The 474 fire district is responsible for what is in the district. You really do need both. You need to have the county commission to take care of its county lands and you need the 474 fire district to take care of its county lands. As you point out here, yes, we do need some additional language changes in order to clarify that each has to be responsible for its respective territories.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Would it be appropriate to say in board of county commissioners' language that says that at least the board of county commissioners would have duties and responsibilities jurisdictionally, or to the land specific, to have that insertion of

"land", and then have the fire districts 474 under the other duties and categories? I am getting a greater appreciation for what happens in rural counties, which you never see on television. I want it to work successfully, rather than implementing policy where you then have to fix it, and two years pass and it is unfixed, and we are back here realizing it did not work.

**Mary Walker:**

What we are going to be doing is working with the State Forester Firewarden to fine-tune this language, and we would be very happy to sit down with you and have you take a look at it before it proceeds any further.

**Assemblyman Trowbridge:**

I know there are gaping holes for fire protection, and you articulated the role of 474 very well. I was looking for help with my confusion between being a professional firefighter and someone who has intense knowledge of rangeland fires. It is either/or, and I understand the difference now a little better.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Any questions from the Committee? [There were none.]

**Jeff Fontaine, Executive Director, Nevada Association of Counties:**

We are here to support the bill in concept. We certainly recognize that there is a great need for this kind of ability for fire associations. We have seen the success of these kinds of efforts. We worked very closely with Mr. Schade and the Winnemucca Wildfire Support Group on their ability to do fuels management and other presuppression types of activity. We recognize and appreciate their capabilities and more importantly, their dedication to try and address these fires, especially in trying to get to those fires before they become catastrophic.

As Assemblyman Hansen indicated, and as was raised by Elko County, we do have some concerns about some of the language and specifically some of the details in section 3. We are very interested in making sure that the obligation and liabilities that the counties might take on in allowing these associations to form are adequately addressed, and that the counties are satisfied with that. We would like to work with others that have an interest in this bill and work out the details. We certainly look forward to bringing a bill back to this Committee that we can all agree on.

**Chairman Ellison:**

What we need to do is get the Division of Forestry, NACO, and Mrs. Walker together, and then we can meet to put that amendment together and get it back to this Committee. I think that would probably be the fastest way to do this.

**Jeff Fontaine:**

We agree. We are happy to do that, and we stand ready to work on this with others.

**Assemblywoman Spiegel:**

As we have been reading through and going through the hearing, it struck me that we had not had any discussion about the start-up costs and purchase of equipment. As you work on the amendment, could you also touch on that? How that would work within the counties, and how it would get paid for?

**Jeff Fontaine:**

We would be happy to do that. That is one of the questions we had as well.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in Elko who wants to testify in favor? [There was no one.]

**Alex Tanchek, representing the Nevada Cattlemen's Association:**

The Nevada Cattlemen's Association want to get on record as being in support of A.B. 163.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Yes, they have a large and vested interest in this. They need to protect their lands. If there is no one else in favor, anyone in opposition, please come forward. [There was no one.] Anybody neutral? [There was no one.] I see there is a little work to be done on this bill, but I think it is a great bill in progress. I am going to close the hearing on A.B. 163. We will now go to work session on Assembly Bill 122.

**Assembly Bill 122: Establishes "Nevada Modernist Architecture Day" as a day of observance. (BDR 19-538)**

**Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst:**

Our next bill is Assembly Bill 122. [Mr. McDonald reviewed the work session document ([Exhibit L](#)).] This was heard in Committee on February 17. Assembly Bill 122 establishes a day of observance, Nevada Modernist Architecture Day, on May 20 of each year. We did receive an amendment during the Committee hearing from Assemblywoman Swank, that the day should actually be called Nevada Mid-Century Architecture Day, and she also suggested changing the effective date to upon passage and approval.



**Chairman Ellison:**

Any questions? [There were none.] Assemblywoman Swank, do you have anything to add? [She did not.] Would somebody like to make a motion?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SPIEGEL MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS  
ASSEMBLY BILL 122.

ASSEMBLYMAN SILBERKRAUS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Would you like to do the floor statement, Assemblywoman Swank?

**Assemblywoman Heidi Swank, Assembly District No. 16:**  
Sure!

**Chairman Ellison:**

Now we will go to Assembly Bill 19.

**Assembly Bill 19:** Revises provisions governing the timing of the adoption of tentative budgets by certain local governments. (BDR 31-456)

**Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst:**

Our next bill is Assembly Bill 19. [Mr. McDonald reviewed the work session document ([Exhibit M](#)).] This bill was sponsored by this Committee on behalf of the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities. Assembly Bill 19 revises provisions regarding the days on which local governments must hold budget hearings on tentative budgets to require that budget hearings instead be held on or before the specified date set in statute. We did receive an amendment from the Nevada League of Cities. The amendment sets a range of dates for when budget hearings may take place beginning on the third Monday in May and ending on the fourth Friday in May.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Does anyone want to make a motion on A.B. 19?

ASSEMBLYMAN SILBERKRAUS MOVED TO AMEND AND DO  
PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 19.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOORE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Assemblywoman Shelton, would you like to do the floor statement on that?

**Assemblywoman Shelton:**

Yes.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Thank you. Now we move to Assembly Bill 20.

**Assembly Bill 20: Revises provisions relating to the budget of the Executive Department of State Government. (BDR 31-287)**

**Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst:**

[Mr. McDonald reviewed the work session document ([Exhibit N](#)).] Assembly Bill 20 was sponsored by this Committee on behalf of the Department of Administration, and heard in Committee on February 13. Assembly Bill 20 removes the requirement for approval by the Governor or Interim Finance Committee for work program changes which result from acceptance of a gift or grant approved by the Governor or Interim Finance Committee (IFC) in a manner required by statute, or carrying forward money from one fiscal year to the next without a change in purpose. We did receive a late amendment from the Budget Division, Department of Administration ([Exhibit O](#)). The intent of the proposed amendment limits the exemption from the IFC's approval to a work program that results from the state agency's acceptance of a gift not exceeding \$20,000 in value or a governmental grant not exceeding \$150,000 in value.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there a motion on the floor?

ASSEMBLYMAN TROWBRIDGE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO  
PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 20.

ASSEMBLYMAN SILBERKRAUS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Now we will move to Assembly Bill 34.

**Assembly Bill 34: Repeals provisions governing certain fire protection districts and fire safety. (BDR 42-369)**

**Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst:**

The next bill is Assembly Bill 34. Assembly Bill 34 repeals provisions related to the State Forester Firewarden from Chapter 473 of the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) and enacts them in Chapter 473 relating to fire protection districts. [Mr. McDonald continued to read from ([Exhibit P](#)).] We did receive a late amendment ([Exhibit Q](#)) on this. The amendment was put together by the Office of the Attorney General upon request of the Chairman. It has to do with liability for when a fire starts. In the first portion of the amendment, you can see that if "any person, firm, association or agency is responsible for willfully or negligently causing a fire, the person, firm, association or agency" can be charged and held responsible. If you go down towards the bottom of the amendment, it says that if there is a fire started that is "an unavoidable accident, he shall not charge the person, firm, association or agency causing the fire...."

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Can we have someone from the Attorney General's Office come and answer questions? Can you give me an example of "unavoidable accident" where the party is not liable?

**Bryan L. Stockton, Senior Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General:**

The definition of an unavoidable accident, as far as I could find, is an accident that could not be prevented in the exercise of due care. I thought that was the language that most precisely reflected the issue that was brought up by the Chairman, that if a person is in a plane crash and starts a fire, that is an unavoidable accident. Obviously, no one exercising due care would get in a plane if they knew it was going to crash. That is the language we chose, just trying to effectuate the intent of what I understood the changes to be.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Is the State Forester Firewarden governed under NRS Chapter 474?

**Bryan Stockton:**

The State Forester Firewarden has several chapters that he administers. Chapter 472 is the one that establishes the position. Chapter 473 includes the fire protection districts that are being phased out.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

You added under section 4, "If the State Forester Firewarden determines..." any person was "willfully or negligently...." In section 4 before, it started with "Any person," and then you added the language specifying the State Forester Firewarden. Does the State Forester Firewarden have that sole authority to determine negligence right now, or is it shared?

**Bryan Stockton:**

The State Forester Firewarden has the sole discretion to make that call initially. I always say that it is subject to challenge. The State Forester Firewarden is the final word on these things, but his determination can be challenged in court. The State Forester Firewarden makes the final administrative determination whether to charge a person or not, but it could be fought in court.

**Assemblyman Trowbridge:**

Did you say you are doing away with 474 districts?

**Bryan Stockton:**

It is 473 districts.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Do we have a motion?

ASSEMBLYMAN STEWART MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS  
ASSEMBLY BILL 34.

ASSEMBLYMAN SILBERKRAUS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The last bill is Assembly Bill 90.

**Assembly Bill 90: Establishes the Nevada Intrastate Mutual Aid System.  
(BDR 36-391)**

**Jered McDonald, Committee Policy Analyst:**

Assembly Bill 90 was sponsored on behalf of the Division of Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety by this Committee and heard in this Committee on February 12. Assembly Bill 90 creates the Nevada Intrastate Mutual Aid System within the Division of Emergency Management of the Department of Public Safety to coordinate requests for mutual aid. [Mr. McDonald continued to read from the work session document ([Exhibit R](#)).] We did receive a couple of amendments. All of these were actually read into

the record at the Committee hearing. The first amendment clarifies the definition of emergency responder, and the second clarifies the definition of volunteer. [Mr. McDonald continued to read from [\(Exhibit R\)](#).]

In addition to the first amendment, we did receive another late amendment ([Exhibit S](#)) from the bill sponsor. The new text is highlighted. This has to do with liability and property insurance or self-insurance. We also did receive another amendment from the Clark County School District (CCSD) ([Exhibit T](#)). My understanding is that the amendments submitted by the sponsor address these concerns raised by CCSD.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Does anybody need clarification on the amendments? Will the presenter of the bill come forward?

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

I wanted clarification on the Division of Emergency Management amendment, which starts on section 19, subsection 1, paragraph (b) ([Exhibit S](#)). Can you talk us through the effect of the change on liability and property insurance?

**Christopher B. Smith, Chief, Office of Homeland Security, Division of Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety:**

I can address the subtle changes. The first change was to specify clearly, as required by the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) Chapters 616A through 616D, what workers' compensation really meant. The second part of that was to add clarification to the language about maintaining a program of liability and property insurance or self-insurance on all operations, vehicles, and equipment. The Nevada Public Agency Insurance Pool/Public Agency Compensation Trust just made that recommendation and wanted to make sure we were very clear on what was to be insured.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Did that add additional cost to developing this bill?

**Christopher Smith:**

Absolutely not. To our knowledge, this is already in place for local jurisdictions.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Okay.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

Is there still a fiscal note on this, and roughly how much is it? Do we know?

**Christopher Smith:**

I am not aware of any fiscal impacts that this bill will have in local jurisdictions or the state. We are already currently operating under this bill. There are existing fiscal impacts. We would be glad to talk with those entities who still have them, but we do not see any additional fiscal impact because we already perform this.

**Jered McDonald:**

Taking a look at the amendment ([Exhibit S](#)), it looks like there is new language in section 19, subsection 1, paragraph (c) that says "all operations," and it looks like it crosses out "Ensure that all vehicles and equipment used in response to the request." Can you clarify that please?

**Christopher Smith:**

The intent of the change was to clarify, not to change any ramification of the law. We were just enhancing the language to make sure it was very clear on the type of coverage that needed to be provided, whether it is an operation, those vehicles, or the equipment that was used. It was just an expansive view of what was already being done. We just wanted to articulate clearly what was to be insured.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

You adding "on all operations" was in order to substitute for language that says "any costs related to the use of personnel and equipment and travel"? Is that what your substitution relates to? That was lines 41 and 42 on page 6 in the original bill, before this amendment.

**Christopher Smith:**

Was that in section 19?

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

I was looking in section 20. All of it worked together, but in section 19, your amendment's line 43 removed "Ensure that all vehicles and equipment used in response to..." and then you added "on all operations." When we talked about this bill, we talked about multiple activities that were going to occur. There were different jurisdictions that were going to be at play and different employees crossing over boundaries in order to do a specific act. One of the larger issues we were trying to talk about was who is covered when and for what. You added that they must "Maintain a program of liability and property insurance or self-insurance on all operations" comma, "vehicles and equipment...." I assume, because it is not defined, that "all operations" captures either duties, functions, or performances. That is why I thought it

dealt with what was in section 20. I wanted to be clear what we are paying for, and who is paying for what, when, and to whom.

**Christopher Smith:**

I think we are talking about making sure that those responding agents and participating agencies have the appropriate insurance on the vehicles and equipment that is to be used in the response. I think what you are asking is about the reimbursement of those costs. A system is already in place for those participating and responding agencies. That is already worked out in the agreements before we roll the rigs.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

I think it would be helpful to say what "all operations" encompasses. What are you speaking to? The comma indicates that it is different.

**Christopher Smith:**

I state that "all operations" is defined by all operations in response to the request: a requesting jurisdiction making a request for particular services. All the operations to support said request are to be covered under their insurance.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

All right. I am going to wait for the check in a couple of years.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Assemblywoman Neal, are you satisfied, or would you like to go back and meet with the parties to make sure the change in the language is correct prior to this bill going forward?

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

It is totally at your discretion. Are you good? To me, it adds additional cost. If the counties and everyone who is at play are in agreement to this language, and they are saying they are okay with covering "all operations" because they are going to send their people out to do this, and this is a good thing, then they are going to be footing the bill. Are you saying that they are all good?

**Christopher Smith:**

When we received this amendment, we sent it out to a variety of stakeholders to garner their input to see what their feelings were on this amendment. We received no negative comments at all. This does not impact the purpose and intent of the bill.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Okay.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Is there any other discussion? [There was none.] Would someone like to make a motion?

ASSEMBLYMAN TROWBRIDGE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO  
PASS ASSEMBLY BILL 90.

ASSEMBLYMAN MOORE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Flores, would you like to do the floor statement?

**Assemblyman Flores:**

Yes.

**Chairman Ellison:**

Carson City, please come forward.

**Bob Crowell, Mayor, Carson City:**

Behind me, I have Supervisor Jim Shirk, Chief Schreihans, who was just appointed our new fire chief, and the Director of Carson City Health and Human Services, Nicki Aaker. Carson City has operated since 1969 as a consolidated municipality, which means that we operate as both a city and a county. That gives us some very favorable capabilities for our operations. In a broad sense, our county and city extends west to Lake Tahoe, south near Spooner Junction going to Lake Tahoe, on the east out near where the V&T Railroad crosses, and north where you come over the hill at Lakeview Drive. That is our county. We have no jurisdictional lines that go between us within our county, which is very favorable. Our Assemblyman, P.K. O'Neill, represents our entire county.

In general, I think I am safe in saying that Carson City has turned, or is in the process of turning, the corner from the disastrous last five or six years. We are actively, and some would say aggressively, positioning our state capital to take advantage of the economic diversification that has been created by this legislative body and the Executive Branch of our government so that we can position our state capital in a manner befitting the twenty-first century. We want our state capital to be an attractive and inviting environment for not only businesses, but families, retirees, and other individuals who want to come here and share in what I call our unparalleled quality of life. That said, let me



introduce Nick Marano. Mr. Marano came to us last June through a very competitive and rigorous selection process. He is a retired Marine colonel. His last job was commanding officer of Camp Pendleton in Southern California. Camp Pendleton is, if you look at it jurisdiction-wise, about the same size as Carson City. He is an Iraq war veteran, and he came here with his wife and has two adult kids. As a personal matter, I have to say that as a retired Navy officer, I could not be more proud to work with Mr. Marano. I would like to turn it over to him to go over the details.

**Nick Marano, City Manager, Carson City:**

The Mayor has already stepped through most of these comments. The only thing I would like to draw your attention to is that in addition to being a consolidated municipality, Carson City is very much a unitary municipality in that the Board of Supervisors is responsible for every municipal service. There are no separate fire protection districts, no water or wastewater districts. We are in the process right now of updating our strategic plan. You can see some of the drafted mission and vision statements that we have [page 3, [\(Exhibit U\)](#)]. I would like to draw your attention to the vision statement. The Mayor has spoken frequently about building Carson City to be a desirable place where future residents and current residents live, work, and play. I will talk more about some of the initiatives that the city is embarking on. I think you are going to be very proud of the changes to your capital city when you return for the next legislative session. I will go into some of the highlights of that. With a little bit of luck, you are going to see some of the dirt turn before you leave here in the summer.

I am sure you have heard very similar financial stories from every city and county. This condition is not unique to Carson City by any means. You can see the sources of revenues to our general fund on the top left of this slide [page 4, [\(Exhibit U\)](#)]. It is about one-third property tax, one-third consolidated tax, and the remainder is other taxes, fees, and government transfers. To the right of that, you can see our Consolidated Tax (CTX) Distribution history. It does appear as if things have bottomed out, and we are in fact on the upswing. For this current fiscal year, things do look quite a bit better. We are currently looking at a double-digit increase in our revenues in fiscal year 2015 over the previous fiscal year. Things do look good in terms of improving, but we are certainly not out of the woods yet.

This slide [page 5, [\(Exhibit U\)](#)] shows data from the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. You can see our challenge. You can see the cost, in human terms, of the recession. Our challenge in terms of moving forward in building a twenty-first century workforce is that both the total number of our labor force and the total number of employed residents in Carson City are lower

than where we were ten years ago. You can see the reduction in city employees in the bottom graph. Carson City relies heavily on government, not just city but also state government. In addition to the reductions and furloughs of state personnel, you can see the reduction in city full-time equivalents in that bottom graph.

I want to give you a picture of where we are in terms of street maintenance and the revenue source for that, which is primarily the county motor vehicle fuel tax, although we get quite a bit also from the basic city-county relief tax as well. People are driving more fuel-efficient vehicles. Tesla is great news for the state, but not great news for folks who rely upon the gas tax to maintain the streets. We are not only driving more fuel-efficient vehicles, which is good for the environment and people's pocketbook, but we are driving fewer miles too. I have another slide that shows traffic downtown. The only thing I want you to take away from this slide [page 6, ([Exhibit U](#))] is that we have a lot of red. We have a lot of roads that need to be upgraded, both arterials and neighborhood roads. The most visible parts of city government are things like roads. When people see roads that are not maintained, it becomes a priority for the Board of Supervisors to try and do something about that.

The business environment section has a couple of busy slides. If you look at the top graph in blue [page 6, ([Exhibit U](#))], you will see the number of new business licenses. Those numbers tend to track with the employment numbers that I had in a couple of slides previously. If you look at the bottom of the slide, that is our valuation in millions of dollars on the left side of that graph. You will see the permit valuation peaked out. Carson City is not Clark County or Las Vegas. A couple of projects can skew it the way it did in one of those years. The bottom tan section is new residential construction. The red part of that graph is commercial construction. You can see in concrete terms that the effect of the recession was not only in construction, but also for the people who rely upon those construction jobs. Building trades are generally some of the better paying jobs. By taking that big of a hit in terms of building and new construction, that hurt family and household income.

The brown graph shows the traffic here on Carson Street. We are excited about the Interstate 580 Freeway completion. It has not been without cost. It has caused a reduction in the traffic on Carson Street. That will continue to drop. We do have a plan that the Board has approved to deal with that reduction and to leapfrog it. I think you will be very excited to see what your capital city is going to be in just a few short years.

You can see where we are in terms of our consolidated tax revenues. The city currently has a sales tax rate of 7.6 percent. That is midway between other

counties in the state, certainly not the highest, but not the lowest either. The Board of Supervisors directed a 2 percent reduction in property tax as we go through planning for next fiscal year's budget, so we are projecting a rate of \$3.52 based on the assessed value. We have the same challenges every other city and county in the state, and probably most cities and counties in the country have.

I want to talk about some of the city-approved infrastructure projects that you will see the next time the Legislature convenes. We are very excited about these. This is a way that Carson City will remake itself in terms of being able to provide a much more walkable and vibrant downtown urban core, with mixed commercial, residential, and dining type establishments. The city has incredible advantages in natural location, outdoor recreation chiefly among them. It is very appealing to the Millennial generation. We plan to take full advantage of that. You will see a new downtown streetscape the next time you return. The Board of Supervisors just approved a new multipurpose athletic facility yesterday that will be located adjacent to the current Boys and Girls Club. We are very excited about that. We have partnered with the Nevada Humane Society, which we are very proud of as well. The Humane Society now provides the full range of animal services for the city. We are getting ready to break ground on a new animal shelter. You can see the artist rendering in the bottom left corner [page 9, ([Exhibit U](#))]. We are very excited about both the new multipurpose athletic facility and the new animal shelter. This is going to be not only an animal shelter, but also a program that I think all of us can be proud of for the state capital.

There is quite a bit of private sector investment that we are very pleased to announce, and pleased to enable. The city is fortunate that the ownership of the downtown Carson Nugget casino is a foundation, and the foundation's charter is to return all of its profits to Carson City. Part of that is going to be what is called the Capitol Mall North project. This was just announced in the news. We have been working very hard behind the scenes for the better part of the past year with the developers on this Capitol Mall project. You can see the details on the slide [page 11, ([Exhibit U](#))] in terms of square footage of both commercial as well as retail real estate that is going to be available. This will be, without any exaggeration, a transformational project for the city. It is going to have a very heavy tech focus. The developer has already filled about 60 to 70 percent of the square footage of those buildings you see with letters of intent. Obviously, they are not leases, but he has almost 70 percent of that commercial square footage already filled with letters of intent. It will have a very heavy tech focus. We think that not only our proximity to the Bay Area but the fact that we sit on a major fiber-optic backbone that runs up the U.S. Highway 395 from Los Angeles to Reno gives us a unique advantage to

leverage the natural location of Carson City and some of the physical infrastructure attributes that we happen to possess.

About two weeks ago, the city hosted a reception at Adams Hub. This is very exciting for us. It is the city's first business incubator, which is a one-stop shop for start-up firms who can locate there. They get their Internet and phone service for a very inexpensive rate. More importantly, they also have access to mentors, people that can help them build their business plan, attract venture capital, and get the business up and running. I will talk a little more about the partnership between Adams Hub, the Carson City Library, the Carson City School District, and Western Nevada College because the city is pushing very hard for this collaboration. The Mayor just wrote an opinion editorial in the *Nevada Appeal* about building a culture and spirit of entrepreneurship in Carson City.

Last night, the city had a joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and the Carson City School Board. We are very excited to talk about the partnership here today between the city, the library, the school district, and Western Nevada College. All of them are very important connection points for us, not only for education, but also for workforce development. We expect to see not only higher levels of growth, but also an interest in high wage growth and in those particular industries that create those high-wage jobs. They tend to be the advanced manufacturing and technology type start-up firms. We are working very hard to encourage and build a culture of entrepreneurship. Working together with the library, we announced a new program called Nevada's Working Capital that will provide for high school seniors, as well as students at Western Nevada College, a certification in advanced technology manufacturing. These are well-paying jobs, generally in the range of \$25 an hour. They provide not only a living wage for the person, but also the ability to raise a family with a decent standard of living. That is something that we are very interested in not only in encouraging, but in building.

Owing to the city's natural location, we have been able to promote a very extensive trail system. If you do have the opportunity to hike or walk, the weather has been nice. It would be great to take advantage of, and you do not need your snowshoes. We have some of the best mountain biking, jogging, and hiking trails in this part of the Eastern Sierras. The Mayor talked about the V&T Railroad. All of those come together, as well as investment the city has put in sports facilities. We actually do quite a bit of sports tourism, attracting major tournaments from California and the Bay Area. Sports tourists like to come here because it is a pleasant place, and we take full advantage of the economic impact of their tourism dollars. I would be remiss in not mentioning that we have just been voted by the readers of *USA Today* as the country's

number one travel-worthy state capital. It is actually quite an accomplishment when you consider what some of the state capitals are. We are proud of that. I want to talk a moment about public safety. The left graph on this slide [page 14, ([Exhibit U](#))] shows our fire department's calls for service. Our fire department also runs our ambulance services. Most of these on the left graph are lifesaving-type calls, about 85 percent. They tend to be on the basic side of the continuum between basic life support and advanced life support. We are working a couple of different options to reduce our costs. Instead of responding with an advanced life support ambulance and paramedics, we are trying to fill that demand signal in a more cost-effective manner. I am very happy that our new fire chief not only has that passion, but also has that specific skill set to lead that change. On the right is the sheriff's calls for service. Crime is down to its lowest level in over 20 years in Carson City. We are very pleased to see this number going in the right direction. We are very happy about that result of the hard work of the sheriff and the deputies here.

**Chairman Ellison:**

I do not know how many pictures my family has taken of Carson Street and the lights during Christmas, and the Capitol Building. It is absolutely beautiful; you have done a great job.

You had a legislator who took Carson City to heart. He loved Carson and the people. He put his heart and soul here, and he would sit down at the end of the row where Assemblywoman Joiner is sitting. To me, Pete Livermore would have been a legacy in this building for years to come. He did a good job and really kept his heart for Carson City.

**Bob Crowell:**

I have to agree wholeheartedly. Pete Livermore was not just an assemblyman. Before that, he was on the Board of Supervisors for a long time. I had the pleasure of sitting with him on the Board of Supervisors, and I think a lot of our youth activities and facilities you see have their genesis in Pete Livermore. If you go out towards our event field south of town, you will see Livermore Lane, which is named for him. We also had the new park there changed to Livermore Park. It is a big deal for us. We are very proud that we had Pete here. We called Pete Livermore "Mr. A&W" in Carson City. My kids worked for him when they were growing up. I used to drag race and park cars at his place. We are also very proud that we have P.K. O'Neill now.

**Chairman Ellison:**

On U.S. Highway 50, where the freeway is going to come down and tie in—is that work going to start this year? Where are they with that work? They are

going to connect the freeway with a spur that will go off and hit Highway 50 up to Tahoe. Are you working with the Department of Transportation (NDOT) on that?

**Nick Marano:**

We are working very closely with NDOT on the 580 Freeway. We expect they will have that out for bid early next month. We were hoping it was going to be the end of this month. That project should be complete down to Spooner Junction by early 2018. It will not include an interchange, so there is still going to be a traffic light at Spooner Junction. You will have the ability to drive without stopping from Carson City to the San Francisco Bay Bridge, as long as you time the traffic right. It is going to open up a whole different world of opportunity for northern Nevada.

**Bob Crowell:**

I know we read in the newspaper about who is paying for what. Carson City is inked in for 5 cents a gallon for gas tax. We have had that since the start of the freeway. We are very proud. I think Nick said it was 2018. I think it is going to be closer to 2017 that the freeway is going to be completed. It has been nearly 50 years that we have been talking about that freeway. That is a big step for us, and it does not come without problems. It is great, but also requires that we make sure we do the right thing downtown so that we have a destination downtown, a great destination with the Capitol buildings, the Legislature building, and the Supreme Court building and all that. We want to make sure that people have a reason to get off that freeway, come down here, spend their money, and enjoy Carson City.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

On your business environment slide [page 7, ([Exhibit U](#))], you were saying that the reduction in red shows the change in businesses. But I noticed a couple of things. The Carl's Jr. closed that was over by Bealls where the Dutch Bros. Coffee shop is. Then you added Rue 21 that is up there by Kohl's. How many businesses closed and opened within the 2014 cycle?

**Nick Marano:**

The red on that slide is commercial real estate construction. In 2014, we did have a number of new retails open. The Carl's Jr. was a problem with the lease. The owner of the Carson Mall wanted to do an upgrade, and they had a conflict. It was also in the way of the new Dutch Bros. Coffee shop, which is really popular. It was a traffic problem. We expect to see another Carl's Jr. on the south end of town open, but we are not sure exactly when. The Tahoe Ridge Winery in that same shopping center is about to open. It is going to provide another level of product.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

When you were showing the employment and labor force slides, where are you seeing the drop-off? You had retail growth and you have an aging population but also a younger population. I am thinking about people ages 18-25. Are there issues there? What are the issues, and what demographic are the issues of employment in?

**Nick Marano:**

There has actually been a drop-off across the board. The big employers in Carson City are government, manufacturing, retail, and health. With the exception of health, there was a drop-off across the board. The population has slightly declined since the 2010 Census. There are about 1,200 fewer people. In addition to the labor force and total number of employed, the population as a whole has declined. If you look at the age cohorts within our population, Carson is slightly older than the state and national average. We are slightly underrepresented in the 24-35 year old demographic. That is something that the Mayor and the Board are very interested in reversing. A lot of the infrastructure projects and priorities are looking to build that particular demographic. The culture of entrepreneurship is to encourage our bright young people to stay. Maybe they go to college, but they come back and they start a business, or they work here in Carson City. We are very interested in reversing that particular demographic trend.

[Assemblyman Moore assumed the Chair.]

**Assemblyman Munford:**

I wanted to take the time to extend my appreciation to Mayor Crowell. When I arrived here as a freshman legislator, you were on the school board, and I remember you being very kind and thoughtful, and you extended an opportunity for me to visit all the schools in Carson City. I remember we went over to Carson High and toured the campus, and it was very refreshing and very educational. I appreciate that. You have always been thoughtful ever since I was a little freshman.

**Bob Crowell:**

We appreciate your appreciation for our outdoors. I know that you and I talked about how quickly we could run up C Hill to get to the flag. I used to do it in less than 30 minutes.

**Vice Chairman Moore:**

Are there any other questions? [There were none.] [([Exhibit V](#)) was submitted on NELIS but not discussed and will become part of the record.] Is there any public comment? [There was none.]

This meeting is adjourned [at 10:34 A.M.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Erin Barlow  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblyman John Ellison, Chairman

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## **EXHIBITS**

**Committee Name:** Committee on Government Affairs

**Date:** February 20, 2015

**Time of Meeting:** 8:37 a.m.

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit</b>	<b>Witness/Agency</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.B. 123	C	Jered McDonald / Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document
A.B. 163	D	Assemblyman Hansen	Testimony
A.B. 163	E	Kay A. Scherer / State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Testimony
A.B. 163	F	Bob Roper / State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	Testimony
A.B. 163	G	Janine Hansen, Private Citizen, Elko, Nevada	Letter of Support
A.B. 163	H	Pete Anderson / Private Citizen	Testimony
A.B. 163	I	Gary Zunino / Elko County Fire Protection District	Testimony
A.B. 163	J	Mel Hummel / Wildfire Support Group, Winnemucca, Nevada	Overview of Wildfire Support Group
A.B. 163	K	Mary Walker / Lyon County and Storey County	Proposed Amendments
A.B. 122	L	Jered McDonald / Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document
A.B. 19	M	Jered McDonald / Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document
A.B. 20	N	Jered McDonald / Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document
A.B. 20	O	Budget Division / Department of Administration	Proposed Amendment
A.B. 34	P	Jered McDonald / Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document

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A.B. 34	Q	Office of the Attorney General	Proposed Amendment
A.B. 90	R	Jered McDonald / Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session Document
A.B. 90	S	Division of Emergency Management / Department of Public Safety	Proposed Amendments
A.B. 90	T	Clark County School District	Proposed Amendments
A.B. 90	U	Nick Marano / Carson City	PowerPoint Presentation
A.B. 163	V	David Smith / Private Citizen	Letter of Support