

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**Eighty-second Session  
May 22, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Finance was called to order by Chair Marilyn Dondero Loop at 8:10 a.m. on Monday, May 22, 2023, in Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair  
Senator Roberta Lange (Substitute for Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro)  
Senator Dallas Harris  
Senator Dina Neal  
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen  
Senator Pete Goicoechea  
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert  
Senator Robin L. Titus

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro, Vice Chair (Excused)

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst  
Cathy Crocket, Chief Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst  
Alex Haartz, Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst  
Adam Drost, Principal Program Analyst  
Dee Chekowitz-Dykes  
Michelle Friedlander, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Tracy Bower, Desert Research Institute  
Frank McDonough, Director, Desert Research Institute

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Paul Moradkhan, Vegas Chamber  
Jeff Fontaine, Humboldt River Basin Water Authority; Lincoln County Regional  
Development Authority  
Doug Busselman, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation  
Alejandro Rodriguez, Nevada System of Higher Education  
Melissa Clary, Friends of Gem Theater  
Janine Woodworth, Commissioner, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners  
Dora Martinez, Nevada Disability Peer Action Coalition  
Kim Young, Chief Executive Officer, Children's Cabinet  
Nicole Lamboley, Chief Executive Officer, Food Bank of Northern Nevada  
Michael Hillerby, City of Sparks; Regional Transportation Commission of  
Washoe County  
Jason Walker, Washoe County Sheriff's Office  
Cadence Matijevich, Washoe County  
Tom Clark, Children's Cabinet; Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce  
Janelle Nance, Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada  
Jennifer Roebuck, Deputy Director, Compliance Division, Nevada Department of  
Taxation  
Chelsea Capurro, Nevada Cannabis Association  
Connor Cain, Cannabis Chamber of Commerce  
Will Adler, Sierra Cannabis Coalition  
Brett Scolari, CPCM Holding; Curaleaf Cannabis Solutions; Clark County Natural  
Medicinal Solutions; GreenMart of Nevada NLV, LLC  
Scot Rutledge, Deep Roots Harvest; Green Life Productions; Moms Meds  
Management  
Jason Greninger, Chief Executive Officer, Atlas Alchemy; Chamber of Cannabis  
Vinson Guthreau, Nevada Association of Counties  
James Creel, Center for Incubation & Findings Research; Compassion Center  
Julie Monteiro, Integrative Providers Association; Coalition for Patient Rights,  
Nevada Chapter  
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents  
Erik Jimenez, Senior Deputy Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer  
Jhone Ebert, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of  
Education  
Terri Laird, Executive Director, Retired Public Employees of Nevada  
Tess Opferman, AFSCME Retirees  
Carter Bundy, AFSCME International  
Kent Ervin, Nevada Faculty Alliance  
Daniel Gordon, Nevada Police Union

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

The Senate Majority Leader has appointed Senator Roberta Lange to serve as an alternate for Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro on the Senate Committee on Finance. She has full Committee privileges. Further notice pursuant to Senate Standing Rule No. 41 will be made today on the Floor.

We will open today's meeting with Senate Bill (S.B.) 99.

**SENATE BILL 99**: Makes an appropriation to the Desert Research Institute of the Nevada System of Higher Education to support the Nevada State Cloud Seeding Program. (BDR S-592)

SENATOR PETE GOICOECHEA (Senatorial District No. 19):

I am here today to present S.B. 99. Joining me is Frank McDonough, program director of the Desert Research Institute's (DRI) Cloud Seeding Program and Tracy Bower from DRI. This bill has an appropriation of \$600,000 a year for cloud seeding. I realize, coming out of the spring we had, nobody wants to talk about clouds or snow. However, we do not know what is ahead of us. Every state around us does cloud seeding. It is effective and works.

I will let Mr. McDonough talk about cloud seeding. What if we can pick up 10 percent more in precipitation, annually? We need to put a price on it because that is where we are. I realize we need a storm front to seed. The generators are in place for the majority of the Nevada sites, but we have not been paying to run it. The \$600,000 appropriation is a small price when we are talking about the drought we experienced the last three to five years.

TRACY BOWER (Desert Research Institute):

We are a nonprofit research institute with over 450 scientists, engineers and staff. Our scientists are leaders in their respective fields including the area of cloud physics. Cloud seeding is a scientifically proven method to increase precipitation by introducing ice-forming dust into winter storm clouds over mountains. It is widely practiced throughout the west and DRI has been a leader for over 60 years in the science of cloud seeding.

As Senator Goicoechea stated, cloud seeding can increase winter snowfall by 10 percent. This will increase the State's water supply at a cost of \$3 to \$10 per acre foot of water. The State funded DRI to conduct a cloud seeding experiment in the 1970s. The success of that experiment led to the State

funding the Nevada Cloud Seeding Program which operated from 1983 to 2009. Due to a budget shortfall, funding was halted in 2009. Nevada funded the Statewide program for one additional year in fiscal year (FY) 2018-2019.

Since State funding halted, DRI has worked with local water agencies to conduct cloud seeding where possible. This patchwork funding has made it less efficient and more expensive than a Statewide program. Funding by local sponsors for projects are often delayed until drought conditions become critical for water supplies. We are missing opportunities to generate additional snowfall before the situation becomes dire.

The funding proposed in S.B. 99 will provide funds needed to operate the 25 State-owned cloud seeding generators valued at \$2 million. These generators, built by DRI, are installed and ready to use. The proposed funding has the potential to produce nearly 100,000 acre-feet of water for Nevada. It is enough to supply 200,000 Nevada homes with their yearly water needs. The Nevada Cloud Seeding Program needs continuity to keep the equipment in good repair. The weather stations and webcams have added benefit for weather forecasting, fire weather observations and climate data when operational. The funding in S.B. 99 will allow that continuity.

SENATOR NEAL:

I reviewed the reporting mechanism, but it stopped after the appropriation stopped. Do you think we should find out what happened with the program after the money went away?

MS. BOWER:

The cloud seeding generators need to be operational for us to produce the additional precipitation. It usually does not extend beyond that period. If there are additional funds available after the next biennium, then we could report on that time frame. However, the additional precipitation is created when the cloud seeding generators are operational.

SENATOR NEAL:

I understand. However, in your testimony, you mentioned when State money was unavailable, you used local money to continue the program. I think it is of interest because this was an unusual winter.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

I understand, but southern Nevada and Clark County also participate in this program. Especially as we move east into the Rockies, this is a benefit to all. I do not know how we deal with the last ten years. We know there is a climate change. We need to take every opportunity we can. This year northern Nevada got five feet of snow and Utah got another three feet of snow, but southern Nevada got nothing.

I believe in the technology, and it can be beneficial. When we start talking about 100,000 acre-feet of water in the State, that is huge.

SENATOR NEAL:

I do not disagree with Senator Goicoechea, but I want extended reporting.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

Let us see what \$600,000 buys us. We will report back to you the data. In case those from southern Nevada wonder, DRI has generators on Mount Charleston, which is in my district.

FRANK McDONOUGH (Director, Desert Research Institute):

There is cloud seeding equipment at Mount Charleston. It was operating this winter until it was suspended. We have built-in criteria to halt the cloud seeding when the precipitation becomes excessive which happened in most areas this winter.

Once we finish cloud seeding during the winter, we will complete all reporting that is a part of our research operational projects. We want to know as much as anybody else how well it worked. We can submit the finished reports to you regardless of the timelines on this bill.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I find it fascinating. Thank you for taking care of Mount Charleston. Northern Nevada is important as well for different reasons.

PAUL MORADKHAN (Vegas Chamber):

We are in support of this appropriation request from DRI. They are national water experts for the research, and this technology is viable. We appreciate your consideration today.

JEFF FONTAINE (Humboldt River Basin Water Authority):

We are in support of S.B. 99. In the Humboldt region, 23 of the 34 groundwater basins are over-appropriated. Long-term over pumping of groundwater basins is impacting the base flow of the river. It is resulting in senior surface right holders receiving less water and in some cases, during the drought, no water at all. This creates a significant impact on the communities in the region as well as the environment.

For the past two years, our Water Authority, its five member counties, conservation districts and mines, combined resources to match funding for cloud seeding. We had two generators in the Santa Rosa Mountains and six generators in the Ruby Mountains. For the 2021-2022 winter season, cloud seeding by DRI was estimated to produce an additional 26,000 acre-feet of snow water equivalent. That is a significant amount of water for users in the region. We urge your support for S.B. 99.

DOUG BUSSELMAN (Nevada Farm Bureau Federation):

We also support cloud seeding and hope that you will pass this bill.

ALEJANDRO RODRIGUEZ (Nevada System of Higher Education):

We are in support of S.B. 99. We would like to thank Senator Goicoechea for tackling an important issue for our State.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 99 and will open the hearing on S.B. 101.

**SENATE BILL 101**: Makes an appropriation for the restoration of the Gem Theater in Pioche, Nevada. (BDR S-598)

SENATOR PETE GOICOECHEA (Senatorial District No. 19):

I have with me today Lincoln County Commissioner Janine Woodworth and Melissa Clary. I am presenting S.B. 101 on behalf of Lincoln County and it pertains to the Gem Theater.

Across the State, we have seen these facilities—whether it is the Eureka Opera House, Piper's Opera House or the Fourth Ward School—provide a gathering place in rural areas. It not only gathers the local community, but people from outside of the County. It is a huge economic development to maintain these

rural communities. We need your help. Again, this bill is brought on behalf of Lincoln County.

MELISSA CLARY (Friends of Gem Theater):

I am the chief gemologist, also known as the president, of the Friends of Gem Theater. I have submitted an overview ([Exhibit C](#)) of this theater. We are a nonprofit organization that purchased this beautiful building, and we are hoping to rehabilitate it. The Gem Theater, built in 1937, is on Main Street in the commercial core of Pioche. Unfortunately, it shuttered in 2002 due to a windstorm blowing off the roof. Since it has been closed for over 20 years, we are faced with quite a bit of disrepair. It will also need to have the building brought up to code on certain things. The costs have been packaged in this request.

The Gem Theater is a 4,500-square-foot, two-story building. It is a single screen theater with a modest art deco style. Its iconic neon marquee was added in the 1950s. Through a grant program, I was able to refurbish the marquee. There are nearly 200 seats, which is quite a big hall for a rural area. Although it is closed, it is the only movie theater left in the County.

It is more than a movie theater because it is a community center. As a gathering hub for the community, we have envisioned many uses for this building. On page 3 of [Exhibit C](#), I have listed some uses for this facility. Theaters are my passion and I have looked at theaters all over the world. Some of the suggested uses were inspired by other theaters like film festivals. We have relationships with Nevada colleges that want to be on a film circuit. The colleges would travel to Lincoln County and show movies. Quite a bit of relationship building can be done through these uses as well.

On page 4 of [Exhibit C](#) is a summary of the funding request. We have phased it and the \$2 million request is based on the scope of work. The costs were obtained from contractors. We have packaged the plan into two phases with phase one listing what the facility needs to open the doors. Phase two is seen as something to build on, depending on the budget. The \$2 million is what we need to get the doors open and show movies again in Lincoln County.

There is a lot of community support for this project. Last June, when we had our sign lighting for the refurbished marquee, we had people from Salt Lake City, Los Angeles and Las Vegas come to the event. This is a playground for

Las Vegas. We have noticed a lot of people are traveling to eastern Nevada for outdoor recreation. The Gem Theater would give them something to do in the evening. It may even extend their stay and produce extra revenue. Our County is struggling.

I humbly ask for your support of S.B. 101.

JANINE WOODWORTH (Commissioner, Lincoln County Board of Commissioners):  
The Gem Theater is in my district and in my hometown of Pioche. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment in support of S.B. 101. I have submitted a letter of support ([Exhibit D](#)). The Board appreciates Senator Goicoechea for sponsoring this bill after we asked him to help acquire funds to restore the historic Gem Theater.

Pioche has a rich and colorful history dating back to the 1860s and was the largest mining town in southeastern Nevada in the 1870s. Today, Pioche attracts new residents with its friendly picturesque hometown appeal. Tourists visit historic buildings and sites such as the Lincoln County Historical Museum, the Million Dollar Courthouse and Boot Hill Cemetery.

Present day Pioche has little mining activity and, as the county seat, its focus is now government. The Gem Theater is the only movie theater constructed in Pioche and the last remaining movie theater still standing in Lincoln County. Prior to moving to Pioche, I saw a few movies at the Gem Theater while visiting from Las Vegas. Located on Main Street in the historic commercial corridor, the Gem Theater is a main anchor tenant.

Our community has several historic buildings in need of restoration. Unfortunately, Lincoln County does not have funding to restore them. We are fortunate that this building has a passionate team behind it. They are ready to fully rehabilitate and bring the Gem Theater back into operation. Although it has not yet opened to the public, the improvements made so far have generated a lot of excitement in the community. The marquee lighting event last June was a great event. It was well attended by Lincoln County residents and visitors as well. The marquee has been lit every Friday and Saturday night since this event. It gives hope the Gem Theater will reopen.

When it is reopened, the theater will operate as a movie theater, host special events and serve as a community center. We have seen the commitment and



the work that the Friends of Gem Theater have completed. We are confident in their ability to achieve project success. Restoring and reopening this theater will bring back a needed arts and entertainment component to Lincoln County.

Additionally, the draw of movies or a film festival in a historic mining town would be a significant tourism boost for eastern Nevada. Approving an appropriation would get the building over the finish line and go a long way toward achieving the goal of expanding tourism and improving our economy.

SENATOR NEAL:

Would this project be eligible for the Main Street Program available through the Governor's Office of Economic Development? Have you reviewed that process?

MS. CLARY:

We worked with the Lincoln County Authority of Tourism (LCAT) to obtain rural marketing dollars available to us from the Nevada Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs' Travel Nevada program. This money is different from the Main Street Program. Pioche does not have a Main Street Program.

There are limited volunteers who participate in LCAT. It would be a heavy lift to build up a Main Street Program. If developed, I am not sure how much capital funding would be available. It would take years to receive these funds. This is partially why we came here today. These are tightly integrated scopes of work. It is difficult to do phase construction with a phased piecemeal grant process. That is why we are requesting a lump sum.

SENATOR NEAL:

Thank you. I thought the Main Street Program had language that addressed historic and commercial development.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Can you give us an update on the process? Is there a roof on the building? Is the interior cleaned up?

MS. CLARY:

We have begun to work with a historic preservation consultant. She is on the advisory group now, and we have completed a road map of the rehabilitation. We are looking at the interior standards for rehabilitation and what we would need to do for this building.

Through a grant, we have the preservation treatment plan done. We have inventoried everything in the building and have cleaned up what was left in the building. Everything is intact and looks like a time capsule. We did have to clean up quite a bit of what was in disrepair. A major capital improvement, the neon marquee, is done.

We have worked with engineers and consultants to break down the scope of work which I provided to the Committee on page 4 of [Exhibit C](#). As you can see from that page, we have had a number of different trades walk through the building.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

You mentioned you are working with a consultant and there has been some planning. How have you paid for that planning process? You mentioned a grant, but has it all been grant donation funding? How is that working so far?

MS. CLARY:

We are working with North Wind Group. This organization specializes in historic preservation work. We paid them through the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This was the first grant we received. Since it is a matching grant, we did have to raise funds. We now have a road map on how to conduct the rehabilitation. That grant helped us assess the needs of the building.

Engineers cannot always do work-in-kind, so we rely on small donations. Our organization is two and a half years old, and we have had a few events to raise money. We have sold commissioned art prints of the building and different things to earn the matching grant funds. We also have had a lot of work donated. For example, the marquee was funded from a U.S. Department of Agriculture rural business development grant. This was our first federal grant, and the application was a large package. However, our request for funding was reduced. As a result, we had to leverage some donations and work with the neon contractor. I am assuming the contractor incurred some financial loss on the cost of the sign.

People have a passion for this building and this work. Sometimes we are able to get in-kind contributions towards certain pieces of the work.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

On page 4 of [Exhibit C](#), you have some quotes listed. Did the quotes come from the consulting process? How accurate are they? When did you receive these quotes? Given the changes in supply chains and cost of labor, how realistic is the \$2 million request? Will it allow you to fully open or will you have more work to do?

MS. CLARY:

My partner in this project is a general contractor by trade. He is the most knowledgeable in obtaining the different bids for work. Most of the quotes are totaled into categories of work. Each line item does not mean one contractor. The bulk of the quotes are within the last three months. I am aware the economy is always fluctuating, so the projected amounts are rounded numbers. We would have to obtain updated quotes once we are ready to do the work.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

If you were granted this funding, how long would this process take?

MS. CLARY:

Given the funding is for two years, we are confident it can be completed within this timeframe. We have trades lined up for certain tasks. We are confident we can get this done within the two years.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

I wanted to follow up on a couple of questions that were asked. Have you been able to repair the roof? Second, if fully funded, will you be able to open the theater or do you need work beyond that?

MS. CLARY:

The roof was repaired prior to purchasing the building. Although there are a few leaks, the building is watertight for the most part. The building is safe right now and the structural integrity has been checked out. It is a safe building. Since no one is entering the building, we do not have a certificate of occupancy.

The projected \$2 million is the funding we need to get the building open and start showing movies.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

How do you acquire the certificate of occupancy?

MS. CLARY:

We have been working with the Lincoln County Planning and Building Department. We have discussed building codes and the life safety systems we would need. The rehabilitation package in [Exhibit C](#) includes some of those updates we are required to get prior to the building opening. Things like ADA-accessible restrooms. The restrooms were built in 1937 and have a step-down entrance. That is not appropriate for today.

SENATOR NEAL:

You are requesting roughly \$700,000 for the plumbing systems and the drainage and water remediation. Are you saying this funding will take care of the plumbing system from 1937?

MS. CLARY:

It is a simple plumbing system because the restrooms are in one line. The water line that we would connect into is simple too. We are pretty confident that the requested funding for the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems is adequate to update them.

JEFF FONTAINE (Lincoln County Regional Development Authority):

We are in support of S.B. 101. There are limited opportunities for economic development and diversification in Lincoln County. It is the seventh largest county in the U.S. by area and 98 percent of the land is owned and administered by various federal agencies. The high percentage of federally owned land is a significant barrier to commercial and industrial development and for new business creation and attraction efforts.

Lincoln County recently completed its five-year comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) which is required by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The CEDS includes an assessment of the level of economic distress. Lincoln County qualifies as an economically distressed community. Fortunately, it is home to abundant natural resources and cultural and historic attractions that are experiencing a growing number of visitors. Community input to the CEDS identified tourism and outdoor recreation as the primary driver of economic activity and an opportunity to support new business creation and retention and expansion of existing businesses.

Accordingly, the new CEDS includes implementing a comprehensive refurbishment, revitalization and adaptive reuse effort of the Gem Theater. This

would be done by 2028 and is 1 of Lincoln County's 13 Strategic Economic Development Goals. We respectfully urge your support for an appropriation.

DORA MARTINEZ (Nevada Disability Peer Action Coalition):

We are in support of this bill. We have some members who live there, and they would love to see this project completed. We do encourage inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility for this building. Please have ramp-accessible bathrooms and put an accessible parking spot in front of the building, not on the side or far away from the door. It will make it easier for the elderly or people with disabilities.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 101 and open the hearing on S.B. 263.

**SENATE BILL 263**: Makes an appropriation to the Children's Cabinet for the purchase and renovation of a parcel of land to carry out the Oddie Project. (BDR S-921)

SENATOR HEIDI SEEVERS GANSERT (Senatorial District No. 15):

I am here today to present S.B. 263. I am joined by Kim Young from the Children's Cabinet and Nicole Lambole from the Food Bank of Northern Nevada. They are here today to discuss the Oddie Project, which is an exciting and important project. They are going to purchase the former Save Mart on Oddie Boulevard in Reno. It is the entire center across from the old Kmart. This is in a very poor, disadvantaged area and the facility will become a hub for northern Nevada services. It will have childcare provided by the Boys & Girls Club, healthcare provided by Community Health Alliance and onsite classes by the Northern Nevada Literacy Center. They will also partner with the chambers to provide other services.

I am excited to introduce this bill today for your consideration. The main bill has a request for around \$12 million. However, there is a proposed amendment (Exhibit E) for another \$4 million for tenant improvements. To summarize, it is \$8 million to buy the building, \$4 million funded by the State for tenant improvements and an additional match by the nonprofits of \$4 million to complete the tenant improvements. Children's Cabinet and the Food Bank of Northern Nevada are both well-known, long-standing nonprofits. They are key to providing essential services for many people.

KIM YOUNG (Chief Executive Officer, Children's Cabinet):

The Children's Cabinet was established in 1985 and our mission is to keep children safe and families together. We provide resources and services that address unmet needs. We are built on a public-private partnership model. Last year, we served over 13,000 Nevada families. The Children's Cabinet offers more than 30 distinct programs in early childhood education, youth development, behavioral health and family support. Some of the offerings include childcare resource and referral. We are the childcare subsidy assistance program in northern Nevada. We offer parenting classes, family counseling and education and workforce training programs for young adults. Wraparound case management is at the core of our services, and we provide programs that are designed to help families thrive.

I am happy to introduce Nicole Lamboley. She is the CEO of the Food Bank of Northern Nevada. Introducing the Oddie Project is a true partnership and collaboration between the Children's Cabinet and the Food Bank.

NICOLE LAMBOLEY (Chief Executive Officer, Food Bank of Northern Nevada):

The Food Bank of Northern Nevada serves 13 Nevada counties and almost 140,000 people per month through our network of partners throughout these counties. We also cover ten counties in Northern California. Since the pandemic, we have had an increase in services. In April 2020, we served a record number of 128,000 people and are seeing a sustained need. Our mission is feeding people today and solving hunger for tomorrow through community partnership.

This is really what the Oddie Project is about. It is about a true partnership where two organizations have come together to create an opportunity to provide comprehensive services to our community. It is in a neighborhood that ranks high on the social vulnerability index. I normally do not get emotional, but I get very emotional about this project. As we enter our fortieth year of serving and feeding people in our community, our board looked at our opportunity to really address the second half of our mission. How do we solve hunger for tomorrow through community partnership?

The Food Bank of Northern Nevada and the Children's Cabinet have come together to create a new Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(25) organization to obtain this building and parcel of land. We have submitted additional information ([Exhibit F](#)) on this project. In addition to our partnership, we also partnered with the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows to provide childcare.

I will let Ms. Young address the childcare needs, but people often ask us why we care about this issue. If we do not provide childcare, then people cannot work, and they end up standing in our lines to support their household food needs. Workforce training is important. We want to create an opportunity to collaborate on providing necessary services in our community.

MS. YOUNG:

As Ms. Lamboley stated, since the pandemic, we continue to experience growth in the needs of children and families. As an organization, we have been providing workforce training for young people for a number of years. However, in the post pandemic era, the need to incorporate wraparound services has become critical. We are providing food to families. We are also providing educational opportunities so people can get their high school diploma and job training skills. This center will allow them to achieve certification and training in areas listed on page 1 of [Exhibit F](#). It will open up a whole host of opportunities for our community to get job training skills. The education will help people to find and keep a job.

Childcare is a critical service that we will offer in this center. Washoe County is only meeting approximately 40 percent of childcare needs. We have families looking for care but cannot find it. There are not enough slots. This project brings in 100 new childcare slots to our community. It is in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows who have a terrific history of providing high-quality care.

MS. LAMBOLEY:

One of the other opportunities we want to create is a culinary workforce training program. We are a member of Feeding America, a network of 200 food banks, and it offers some type of culinary job training program. We would provide not only the job skills in the hospitality sector, but also wraparound case management. People need to understand the soft skills necessary to obtain and maintain employment. This will help families thrive.

We envision the center having a commercial-grade kitchen. It will help us to produce meals for our programs. We provide meals in our Kids Café, feeding seniors and other opportunities.

We have met with community leaders in the Washoe County nonprofit sector and there is tremendous interest in participating in this center. The facility has

approximately 4,000 square feet of space yet to be designed for meeting community needs. The other nonprofit organizations will help us design this space. The center is like the former grocery box which is a perimeter with on-site services. There are many opportunities that can be brought in to help meet the needs of the community as they are identified.

It is a neighborhood-based service model. It is accessible by bus or walking to the center. The City of Sparks has been investing in the Oddie Boulevard corridor by improving the "walk-ability" of that street. It is also accessible by the freeway. The facility is within the neighborhoods around one zip code, which has a high social vulnerability index. There are some services, but it lacks coordination of services. We want to make it easier for people.

The University of Nevada, Reno, is enabling students to do internships on-site. Students, who are seeking degrees in human-centered work, would have the opportunity to work with the neighbors seeking these services.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

This bill is a vital opportunity for us to serve many people in northern Nevada who live in these vulnerable areas.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

Can you clarify the total amount you are requesting? I see \$8 million, then \$4 million. There is also an amendment requesting \$4 million with a match. Is the total amount still \$12 million?

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

It is a request for \$12 million. When we were discussing this project, we knew it would cost additional money. There are many projects brought to the State and it is hard for the State to provide all the money. It is important to show a match. The cost is \$8 million for the building and \$8 million for tenant improvements. However, the nonprofits will cover half of the improvements. It ends up \$8 million plus \$4 million with the latter matched.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Will the total be \$16 million?



SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Yes, the total is \$16 million. The property is about 7.5 acres, and the building is about 65,067 square feet. It is a large center that will provide services by the nonprofit organizations in the local area.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I was caught off guard when you said you are feeding counties in northern California in addition to northern Nevada. Are we able to feed Nevadans and still have food left over for northern California?

Ms. LAMBOLEY:

Yes. Our service area is set by Feeding America. We partner with California food banks to provide this service and manage some California commodities. We manage the Nevada commodities through the Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA), which are identified by counties. We are meeting the needs of northern Nevada.

We have seen an incredible growth in community support for feeding people. However, we need to do something a little different. More than 50 percent of the services provided are in Washoe County. This is why the center is critical. We are also working on rural access programs with NDA to make sure we are meeting their needs too.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Did we acquire any funding from our northern California partners or counties?

Ms. LAMBOLEY:

Yes. California is structured a little different, but we get some of its state dollars for services utilized in those California counties. We segregate the funds, so California funding stays in California and Nevada funding stays in Nevada.

Not all food is equal food. It is segregated by the funding type. We do get support from community members in those California counties and grants from California-based organizations. This funding supports feeding our neighbors in California.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Is there any chance California will partner with us on the Oddie Project? Will the facility be used to feed northern Californians?

MS. LAMBOLEY:

It is unlikely Californians will travel here to seek services. We have other partners in California who provide this type of service and they would likely use those services. The other funding from the match dollars may help support California residents who are seeking job training. However, they would likely be seeking Nevada employment.

MICHAEL HILLERBY (City of Sparks; Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County):

As you have heard, this is an important project and Sparks has invested into it. The Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County is in the midst of a roughly \$50 million project along Oddie Boulevard. It includes roadway improvements with ADA accessibility upgrades, multimodal transit, bus stops, bicycle and pedestrian walkways, new landscaping, lighting and safer roadways to help the community to use that area better. It will make this new project more easily accessible to everyone involved. We appreciate your consideration.

JASON WALKER (Washoe County Sheriff's Office):

This is an excellent project for the community and will bring in needed resources and support. We recognize both the Children's Cabinet and Food Bank of Northern Nevada as long-standing major community resource partners. We are in support of S.B. 263.

CADENCE MATIJEVICH (Washoe County):

We are in strong support of S.B. 263. Our Board of County Commissioners has considered and taken an official policy in support of this bill. It is within our legislative principles of partners providing services to our shared constituents.

We realize this is a significant request for money, but it will be worth the return on the investment. It will pay dividends for years in our community. You heard in prior testimony the breadth and scope this project will provide to our community. We respectfully ask for your support.

TOM CLARK (Children's Cabinet; Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce):

I am honored to represent the Children's Cabinet and support what Ms. Young has brought forward.

I also represent the Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce. We look forward to working with these two nonprofit organizations to develop the kind of programs previously described. We appreciate your support.

MS. MARTINEZ:

The Nevada Disability Peer Action Coalition would like to thank the sponsor for this commonsense bill. We appreciate that the location will be accessible to people with all types of abilities. We encourage you to support this bill.

JAMELLE NANCE (Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada):

I am calling in support of S.B. 263. The Children's Cabinet and the Food Bank of Northern Nevada are crucial partners who strive to meet the needs of this sector in Sparks. We know this is an area of high need. In the presentation, they discussed the use of this appropriation. They cited critical needs for childcare and workforce development. We would just like to thank these organizations for working to improve the lives of children.

The Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada understands the true value of coordinated partnerships. We stand in support of increasing access and utilization of quality early learning experiences, health safety and economic well-being. This project will do this, so we are asking for your support on this bill.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

I appreciate your consideration of S.B. 263. This is a Sparks-based facility with a strong partnership between the Children's Cabinet and the Food Bank of Northern Nevada and will serve many Nevadans.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 263 and open the hearing on S.B. 277.

**SENATE BILL 277**: Revises provisions relating to cannabis. (BDR 56-193)

SENATOR DALLAS HARRIS (Senatorial District No. 11):

Thank you for taking the time to hear S.B. 277. I acknowledge this is the money committee and not the policy committee. Therefore, I will start with the dollars associated with this bill. The Cannabis Compliance Board (CCB) did not request additional funding in their fiscal note for this bill. I think that is generous, because we may see additional revenue generated through S.B. 277.

This legislation will move the structure from single licensing to dual licensing. Our retail dispensaries, with at least 33 new establishments, will move from adult use only to both medical- and adult-use sales. Given the increased amount of marijuana a person can purchase at any one time, the State may see an increase in tax revenue.

I have a proposed amendment ([Exhibit G](#)) before the Committee that I will run through quickly. We are looking to have counties and local governments use a portion of their license tax revenue to ensure consumers are educated on legal versus the illegal market and how to safely purchase this product. We are still working with the local governments on this language, and it may be amended or possibly removed. Local governments can contract with community groups who are already doing this work. It is important to note the amendment does not mandate the amount to spend on this education program.

We are working with the CCB regarding the language for the second bullet point on [Exhibit G](#). The seeds, root balls and stalks of the plant will not be considered in the definition of marijuana. This change is to align State law with the federal definition.

The third bullet point on [Exhibit G](#) will expand the number of safe entrances, as long as they are secure. The bill only allows retail dispensaries. We want to make sure it applies to other cannabis facilities, including consumption lounges, that will keep the entrances secure.

The fourth and fifth bullet points on [Exhibit G](#) address the 5 percent or less ownership requirements. It will remove the requirement for a person within this range for an ownership interest in an establishment to have a registration card. We will be working with the CCB on promulgating regulations for this item. We are going to allow the CCB to waive the 5 percent requirement as well for the cannabis executive.

Finally, we are going to authorize the CCB via the petition process to give an exemption to excluded felony offenses. The bill, as originally drafted, eliminated the exclusion in its entirety.

The Nevada Department of Taxation submitted a fiscal note on this bill. Taxation requested a new auditor position by October 2023. However, the provisions of the bill do not become effective until January 1, 2024. In addition

to the timeline gap, the transition to a dual license structure will happen on a rolling basis as licenses are renewed. We do not anticipate there will be 33 new establishments to inspect on January 1, 2024. It will happen more slowly than what Taxation is anticipating.

I am aware of comments that we need to make sure the licensees are properly registered for a seller's permit. Keep in mind these are establishments already operating as adult-use only. They already have a seller's permit to collect the tax. I do not think the Department would have to take that on.

There are 60 adult-use retail licenses and 27 of them are conditional licenses. We would need to remove these licenses from the anticipated workload. The most we will see is 33 new establishments that would add the sale of medical-use cannabis. The key is to make sure the establishment is not charging the tax on the medical sales which we have been doing for quite some time. We have a lot of dual licensees. I have no doubt the current single licensees will easily pick up on how to do both the medical- and adult-use sales. It is not something that needs to be figured out repeatedly with Taxation.

SENATOR NEAL:

On the fiscal note, how is "other cannabis product" classified? Why would it not have a tax attached to it? The fiscal note states, "the retail excise tax does not apply to the sale of medical use of cannabis or cannabis product to the holder of a registry."

SENATOR HARRIS:

I did not write this fiscal note and so I can only guess. We may need to have Taxation respond. I am assuming it is referencing flower versus a concentrate or gummies. Those are also not taxed under the excise tax if the person has a medical-use card. My bill does not actually create this exemption. It is an exemption already in law.

SENATOR NEAL:

In section 1 of the bill, there is a provision stating the CCB, before adopting a regulation, can look to see if there is an adverse effect on the economic burden of licensees. What about the economic burden to the State?

SENATOR HARRIS:

I believe this is something the CCB is already doing. I am happy to consider requiring them to do it. This language was to ensure the regulator is looking at what the burden is to those they are imposing those regulations on, including the impact to the environment. We have had previous discussions on labeling requirements. We wanted to make sure that the regulatory burden to the businesses and the environment was taken into consideration.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

We have a county that petitioned for a medical license. This language is now in the regulatory process and will impact whether this happens or not. I am glad for the clarification. The application is for medical use and was applied for by the county. However, the county was informed that "we are not there yet with the regulations." It has been ongoing for a long time. I am glad to see the language has been included. I hope it calls attention that we should not place the burden on a local jurisdiction.

SENATOR NEAL:

Is the Nevada Department of Taxation available? On your fiscal note, it refers to section 15 and "that the retail excise tax does not apply to the sale of medical use of cannabis or cannabis product to the holder of the registry identification card." What is the other cannabis product that is being defined?

JENNIFER ROEBUCK (Deputy Director, Compliance Division, Nevada Department of Taxation):

It would be edibles or concentrates.

SENATOR GOICOECHEA:

I wanted to talk about the permitting process. In this bill, it references a jurisdiction applying for a license. I have a constituent county that has been working for over a year to get a medical-use license. The county has been told it may have to go to the lottery. This is problematic because under the original law the county was entitled to it.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Mr. Tyler Klimas, executive director of CCB, is in Las Vegas and is hearing everything you are saying right now. He is getting the message.

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CHELSEA CAPURRO (Nevada Cannabis Association):  
We are in support of S.B. 277.

CONNOR CAIN (Cannabis Chamber of Commerce):  
We are in support of S.B. 277.

WILL ADLER (Sierra Cannabis Coalition):  
Senate Bill 277 will clarify and modify a few of the current issues with Nevada's cannabis law. We would like to thank Senator Harris for all of the changes it will make to Nevada's cannabis law.

BRETT SCOLARI (CPCM Holding; Curaleaf Cannabis Solutions; Clark County Natural Medicinal Solutions; GreenMart of Nevada NLV, LLC):  
We urge your support of S.B. 277.

SCOT RUTLEDGE (Deep Roots Harvest; Green Life Productions; Moms Meds Management):  
We are in support of this legislation. We want to thank Senator Harris for convening a number of us over the past year to discuss some of these items. We appreciate the amendments being offered and the work the CCB is doing with Senator Harris on some of these changes.

I have talked to many in the Legislature about the two-thirds requirement for this bill. I think it is due to the fee structure going from two license types to a single license. It required us to increase the fees for the adult-use only license types to make sure this was a revenue neutral collection for the industry. We urge your support.

JASON GRENINGER (Chief Executive Officer, Atlas Alchemy; Chamber of Cannabis):  
The bill will improve revenue because it will increase volume and purchases. Having greater availability for patients' needs is most important. Patients are also making their own medicine and maintaining a treatment that has many difficulties with smaller purchase limits. For example, cannabis has hundreds of variables, up to 144 cannabinoids make our 150 endogenous cannabinoids. Larger amounts allow for consistency in these variables. Having the same variables is ideal to properly evaluate the effects and efficacy of cannabis.

Our medical patients will provide more revenue. They want to manage their treatment smarter. Our wish, and our medical patients' wish, is that we would follow Oregon's example to provide eight ounces of flower and five grams of concentrate for the medical patients. It can help make medicine intelligently.

VINSON GUTHREAU (Nevada Association of Counties):

Our members are comprised of all 17 Nevada counties. We are in neutral since local government was mentioned in the amendment. We have not had a chance to digest the full amendment, but we echo the comments of the sponsor that we will continue to work on this and get the language right. I wanted to put that on the record.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

There are only two and a half weeks left in this Session. When you say you are working on it, you need to work fast.

JAMES CREEL (Center for Incubation & Findings Research; Compassion Center):

We are in opposition to S.B. 277. We are Oregon's oldest federally recognized medical cannabis clinic system in existence. I have submitted my written comments ([Exhibit H](#)) to this Committee.

For the record, our patients can go to a dispensary and get an ounce of cannabis for \$17 out the door. Let Oregon's program actually set the standard if you are going to point to it as an example. The only way to eliminate a black market or illicit market is to flood the actual marketplace with cheaper products. It will drive out the illicit players. Raising taxes and/or licensing fees is counter to that mission because the cost will be passed on to the patients, which leads them toward the black market.

I do admire the intent behind the bill. Thank you for your service to Nevada and the evolution of a responsible cannabis industry. Let us do better next time.

JULIE MONTEIRO (Integrative Providers Association; Coalition for Patient Rights, Nevada Chapter):

We are in opposition to S.B. 277. Our last attempt at the April 10, 2023, hearing in Carson City fell upon deaf ears. We wish to submit an official record of letters in opposition ([Exhibit I](#) and [Exhibit J](#)) to ensure our voices are heard. This is an imbalanced bill that overlooks the patients. In the future, we would like to be more involved in this type of legislation.



Allowing the purchase of two and a half ounces for medical and adult use sounds like enough for purchase and possession for either user. However, it is not adequate when a person is working to control complex disease states. We need to make sure the medical-use program and the adult-use program are not combined.

The medical cannabis patients and I appreciate the 10 percent excise tax; however, we should have a 100 percent tax exemption like pharmaceuticals have. We are almost there, but we need to give a little bit more to help patients.

I want to see the distribution of excise taxes. We are a little concerned about what the CCB's and local government's costs are for carrying out the provisions of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 678C. We need a definition for those provisions. I question where the money goes, in excess of the \$5 million above the collected taxes, because it is not designated in this bill. We know from the past in the Question Two Campaign that all the funds were to go to education. However, since it was not defined properly, none of the funds have gone to the children. I can see this happening again in this bill. We really need to say where those funds are going.

The amendment is perfect because it is adding education requirements by local governments. Education is the key, and it is the reason why I am here today. I want to take it a step further and require dispensaries to be educated on the risks associated with giving the wrong medicine or cannabis strain to the wrong cancers. There are certain situations with risks and safety issues. In the past, it was proposed that physicians, pharmacists or nurses would work in the dispensaries, but for some reason, it got shot down.

The safety of our dispensaries and the knowledge that is going out is important. There has been misinformation and conflicts of interest. I like where this legislation is going but some of the language needs to be amended.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

For clarification, the money from marijuana and cannabis sales has gone to education in Nevada. I want to make that clear. I do not have the number in front of me, but this has been a rumor that continues.

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SENATOR NGUYEN:

Can you clarify that under current law, medical use has a limit of two and a half ounces?

SENATOR HARRIS:

Yes, that is correct. The current limit in law for medical patients is two and a half ounces.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

Is your bill increasing the limit to two and a half ounces for everyone?

SENATOR HARRIS:

Yes, that is correct. We are not lowering the limits for medical-use patients nor are we increasing the limits for them. We are raising the limit for everyone.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

If this bill did not pass, would it be status quo and not affect our current structure for medical use?

SENATOR HARRIS:

Yes, that is correct. Medical patients will be able to purchase two and a half ounces whether this bill passes or not.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

For clarification, in the last two years, \$300 million was given to the State Education Fund from the cannabis excise tax.

We will close the hearing on S.B. 277 and open the hearing on S.B. 329.

**SENATE BILL 329**: Requires appointment of a committee to study provisions relating to budgetary and reporting requirements for school districts.  
(BDR S-443)

SENATOR DINA NEAL (Senatorial District No. 4):

I am here today to present S.B. 329 on behalf of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education. This bill appoints a subcommittee to study the budgeting process for Nevada school districts and report its findings by July 1, 2024. I could not find a fiscal note because the Interim Committee has

legislative staff who are already budgeted for. The Interim Committee has the ability to work on issues set forward as the Legislature designates.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):  
We are in support of S.B. 329.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:  
We will close the hearing on S.B. 329 and open the hearing on S.B. 499.

**SENATE BILL 499**: Revises provisions governing expenditures from the Endowment Account established in the State General Fund related to the Nevada College Savings Program. (BDR 31-1190)

ERIK JIMENEZ (Senior Deputy Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer):  
Thank you for giving us the opportunity to present S.B. 499. As part of our budget closing, the State Treasurer's Office was approved for two new positions. One was a Deputy of Financial Literacy and Security, which was authorized under S.B. No. 188 of the 81st Session. The position is responsible for implementing the Individual Development Account Program along with other programs that increase access to financial security for residents who need it. The second position is for the Nevada Achieving a Better Life Experience Savings Program to help individuals with disabilities save for a better future.

Both positions are funded by the College Savings Endowment Account pursuant to NRS 353B.350. This Account is paid for by fees college savings plan providers pay for the privilege of doing business with the State. We recognize there needs to be a change to NRS 353B, section 5, subsection (e). This will allow the two positions to be covered under financial education. This bill is also raising the cap on financial education from 3 percent to 10 percent of the Account.

Fiscal year 2021-2022 is the model for FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025. In FY 2021-2022, the Account had \$5,989,335.22 in it. Three percent of this total is \$179,680.06. This funding would have been inadequate to cover the cost of the two new positions. This is why we need to increase the cap.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

During earlier testimony, we discussed these two positions and asked about the cap. Do you really need to increase it to 10 percent, since it is only two positions? As I recall, your office said they could go as little as 5 percent.

MR. JIMENEZ:

We discussed this with the Fiscal Division. However, in FY 2023-2024, the total cost for the endowment, including these positions, is \$423,150.66. In the following fiscal year, it will increase to an annual cost of \$470,151.86. This would cause our expenditures to exceed the allowable cap. It would put us around an 8 percent cap with no flexibility. Since we are changing statute, a smaller cap may prevent us from paying an employee's salary if there are any Legislative enhancements to pay and benefits.

We worked with both the Fiscal and Legal Divisions. While we recognize the Committee wanted us to do that due diligence, we are all comfortable with a 10 percent cap. It will allow a little more flexibility.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Right now, it is 3 percent, not 8 percent.

MR. JIMENEZ:

I meant to say, if we moved to an 8 percent cap, then we would still be below it. If we moved to a 9 percent cap, then it would be \$539,000. Finally, if we moved to a 10 percent cap, then it would be \$598,933 in each fiscal year of the upcoming biennium.

As advised by the Fiscal Division, the 10 percent cap will allow a little bit of wiggle room. This cap will account for additional personnel expenses in response to decisions made by the Legislature.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Perhaps Fiscal Division staff can respond, but going from \$423,000 to \$470,000 is not 7 points or even 5 points.

WAYNE THORLEY (Senate Fiscal Analyst):

Mr. Jimenez is correct. We met with his office and looked at the numbers based on the direction we received from the Senate Finance Committee and Assembly Ways and Means Committee, known as the Money Committees, in closing the

State Treasurer's budget. We looked at the least amount we could add to the cap to fund the new positions the Money Committees had approved. As Mr. Jimenez said, it was around 8 percent.

However, the Legislature is considering compensation enhancements for State employees. Since the discussion on this is not complete, the increased amounts were not considered when funding these approved positions. Moving up to a 10 percent cap would give the Treasurer's Office the necessary room under the cap to pay for both the existing financial education programs that are funded out of the Account and these two positions.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 499 and open the hearing for S.B. 500.

**SENATE BILL 500**: Makes appropriations to the Department of Education for the replacement of computer hardware and associated software. (BDR S-1156)

JHONE EBERT (State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education):

We are coming to you today to ask you to replace computer devices that are beyond economical repair. These devices are five years old or older. The amounts are included in S.B. 500.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Is the total request on this bill \$69,925?

MS. EBERT:

That is correct.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 500 and open the hearing for S.B. 501.

**SENATE BILL 501**: Establishes for the 2023-2025 biennium the subsidies to be paid to the Public Employees' Benefits Program for insurance for certain active and retired public officers and employees. (BDR S-1209)

ADAM DROST (Principal Program Analyst):

I am joined today by my colleague, Alex Haartz, who is also with the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Fiscal Division. Senate Bill 501 establishes the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) rates for the 2023-2025 biennium.

This is a budget implementation bill. It is the outcome of the budget hearings and the establishment of the PEBP budget for the upcoming biennium. This bill reflects the decisions of the Money Committees. Section 1 establishes the State contribution of \$730 per month in FY 2023-2024 and \$759 per month in FY 2024-2025 for active State employees.

Section 2 of this bill establishes the contributions for retirees. Section 2, subsection 1, provides the contribution for non-Medicare retirees at \$515 per month in FY 2023-2024 and \$545 per month in FY 2024-2025. Section 2, subsection 2, details the State contribution for Medicare-eligible retirees participating in PEBP. In subsection 2, for those persons who retired before January 1, 1994, the base State contribution is \$195 per month. That is \$13 per month per year of service and the Money Committees approved it at 15 years of base service. For retirees who retired after January 1, 1994, it is \$13 per month up to a maximum of \$260 per month for 20 years of service.

This bill becomes effective on July 1, 2023, for purposes of funding employer contributions.

SENATOR NGUYEN:

You talked about \$13 for retirees. There had been discussion about moving it up to \$15. Can you explain why it remained at \$13 per month?

MR. DROST:

It reflects the Governor's recommended budget, which maintained that number for the upcoming biennium.

TERRI LAIRD (Executive Director, Retired Public Employees of Nevada):

We represent all public employees, both active and retired. We support S.B. 501 and want to thank the Legislature for working on improving wages and benefits for State employees. They have labored with wages far less than their counterparts in local government. We are grateful the Joint Money Committee increased the life insurance benefits to pre-COVID levels for active and retirees in PEBP.

While active State employees will hopefully see compensation and benefit increases this Session, we cannot help but be disappointed by the health reimbursement arrangement (HRA) contribution for retirees in the PEBP Medicare Exchange. They will not see an increase. It has been over ten years since retirees in PEBP were moved to the experimental Medicare Exchange. Since then, the HRA has been raised only once to what it is now at \$13 per month per year of service for a maximum of \$260 for someone with 20 years of service. We had hoped to see that contribution raised to \$15 because we all know how expensive health care is. This is especially true for seniors living on a fixed income.

On behalf of our nearly 8,000 members, we thank you for your hard work this Session to improve the lives of all State employees. If there is any possibility of impacting the HRA for our members in the Medicare Exchange, it would be appreciated.

TESS OPFERMAN (AFSCME Retirees):

We represent around 1,300 State retirees in Nevada. I want to echo everything Ms. Laird said. We are appreciative of this Body, and the Legislature as a whole, for the huge strides made this Session. On behalf of State employees, we have had a vacancy crisis and this Body has done great work to address it. We also appreciate the return of life insurance that was a request of the retirees.

I want to echo Ms. Laird's comments about the \$13 HRA payment. One of our retirees spends \$573 a month, which includes Medicare Part B prescription drugs, dental and vision insurance. This means he gets an HRA payment of \$260. But he is spending \$313 per month for out-of-pocket costs. This amount that he spends each month increases as healthcare costs increase. Not increasing the \$13 a month means those costs are coming out of his pocket. This is a great burden for retirees who are living on a fixed income. He is one example of many retirees who are increasingly incurring out-of-pocket costs because this \$13 remains the same.

I appreciate everything this Body has done, but we do hope to work with you in the final days of the Legislative Session and the Interim to increase it from \$13 to \$15.

CARTER BUNDY (AFSCME International):

We want to echo the comments about the retiree subsidy. We thank you for the work done on restoring life insurance and increasing health savings account and HRA subsidies. This bill goes a long way toward making premiums affordable. We know that we need to work during the Interim with PEBP on plan design, in particular relating to co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles.

One of the most common things we hear from our members is that PEBP is a good health insurance, if they can afford to use it. That is really a question of plan design. We urge you to support S.B. 501.

KENT ERVIN (Nevada Faculty Alliance):  
We support S.B. 501.

DANIEL GORDON (Nevada Police Union):  
We support S.B. 501. It is important that you are hearing this bill and considering it for increased subsidies for both retirees and active employees.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:  
We will close the hearing on S.B. 501. We will introduce Bill Draft Request (BDR) 32-1086.

**BILL DRAFT REQUEST 32-1086**: Revises provisions relating to taxation. (Later introduced as [Senate Bill 502](#).)

MR. THORLEY:  
You have before you BDR 32-1086 which is a request of the Governor's Office of Finance. This BDR will do two things. First, it will increase the standard deduction for the commerce tax from its current \$4 million to \$6 million. The bill will also institute a motor vehicle fuel tax holiday for FY 2023-2024 and appropriate \$2.5 million from the State General Fund to the Highway Fund. This is to offset the reduction in highway fund revenue associated with the fuel tax holiday.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:  
I will accept a motion on this item.

SENATOR TITUS MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 32-1086.



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SENATOR NGUYEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Hearing no public comment, this meeting is adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Mary Ashley,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

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

<b>EXHIBIT SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit Letter</b>	<b>Introduced on Minute Report Page No.</b>	<b>Witness / Entity</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 101	C	7	Melissa Clary/ Friends of Gem Theater	Overview
S.B. 101	D	8	Janine Woodworth/ Lincoln County Board of Commissioners	Letter of Support
S.B. 263	E	13	Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 263	F	14	Nicole Lambole/ Food Bank of Northern Nevada	Summary of Oddie Project
S.B. 277	G	20	Senator Dallas Harris	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 277	H	24	James Creel/ Compassion Center	Written Testimony
S.B. 277	I	25	Julie Monteiro/ Integrative Providers Association	Letter of Opposition
S.B. 277	J	25	Julie Monteiro/ Coalition for Patient Rights, Nevada Chapter	Letter of Opposition