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Association of American State Geologists

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March 21, 2011

Dr. Milton Glick, President  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Mail Stop 001  
Reno, NV 89557

Dear President Glick:

As president of the Association of American State Geologists (AASG), I communicate often with state and university officials about the value to society of state geological surveys. AASG represents all 50 state geological surveys plus Puerto Rico. State surveys were created to map and characterize mineral resources and disseminate that information for the benefit of society. The industries that produced these minerals propelled the great economic growth experienced by America in the past 100 years. Since their inception the roles of state geological surveys have changed to include engineering geology, geologic hazards, environmental geology, and hydrogeology.

The Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology is one of the shining stars among all 50 state geological surveys. The NBMG at the University of Nevada at Reno and Director Jon Price have set a standard for excellence many state surveys aspire to achieve. Dr. Price was recently asked to testify before the House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources because of his status as an internationally recognized expertise in this area. The NBMG is looked upon by many state surveys as a model for serving industries, citizens and government the information needed to advance the state. Dr. Price and the NBMG are nationally and internationally known for their knowledge of minerals and the vital minerals industry essential to America's wellbeing.

It may come as a surprise that a number of state geological surveys have in the past experience increases in funding during times of economic hardship because stimulating the basic industries to produce minerals and jobs is one of the quicker ways of stimulating a state's overall economy. State geological surveys such as the NBMG provide the necessary expertise and information such as maps, mineral assays, and drill data that give industries the confidence they need to proceed.

Seventeen or one-third of all state geological surveys are operated by universities. These seventeen surveys contribute greatly to their universities' missions by way of direct assistance to the citizens of the state and its mineral producers; bringing grants and contracts into the university sponsored projects; interacting with faculty and staff; providing expertise to augment the universities need for diversified sciences; hiring students; and publishing information.

This is a difficult time financially for all universities but diminishing the NBMG for short term gains will have negative consequences for the university and the state of Nevada beyond the current economic hardships.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter and as president of the Association of American State Geologists, I would be happy to respond to any questions about state geological surveys.

Very sincerely yours,

James C. Cobb, President, Association of American State Geologists  
Director and State Geologist, University of Kentucky

cc. Dr, Jonathan Price, Director and State Geologist, Nevada