

Milton Glick, President
University of Nevada Reno
Reno, NV 89557

March 15, 2011

Dear President Glick,

I am writing in the strongest possible terms to urge you to reconsider the proposed devastating cut to the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology (NBMG) that includes rolling it into the Department of Geological Sciences and Engineering. This would be a tragic mistake for the University, the state and people of Nevada, and without exaggeration, the United States as a country.

I write this letter from multiple perspectives: 1) as editor of Economic Geology, the premier scientific journal in the world dealing with natural resources. This is the flagship journal of the Society of Economic Geologists with a worldwide membership of more than 5,000, including many in the state of Nevada. 2) as professor of Geosciences at Smith College in Massachusetts, the largest and most distinguished women's liberal arts college in the United States. Several of my former students are employed professional geologists in the state of Nevada. 3) as the current Geological Society of America/United States Geological Survey Congressional Fellow and 4) as a science policy staff member of the Honorable Gabrielle Giffords, United States Congresswoman (AZ 8th district). I can say without reservation that the NBMG is the premier state geological organization in the United States. The reputation of the University and the state of Nevada are uplifted by the quality work of the NBMG.

In light of the current tragedy due to the earthquake and tsunami in Japan, as well as previous natural disasters in Haiti and Chile, the world knows well how valuable organizations like the NBMG are in times of trouble as well as in times of prosperity. The NBMG is the geologic seed corn of the State of Nevada. To lose this incredibly valuable resource for the people and state of Nevada would be very short-sighted.

We all understand the financial difficulties faced by every state government and there is no question that cuts need to be made. But the costs and benefits of those cuts need to be carefully considered – not all dollars are equal. The point of this letter is simple. The value of the NBMG to the University and the people and state of Nevada is very large relative to its modest budget. The Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology is a treasure that must be protected.

I am not an expert in the finances of the University or the state of Nevada, but one option that should be considered is dedicating some of the Net Proceeds of Minerals tax to support NBMG. With the revenue from this tax likely to rise with increasing mineral and energy production, the State could benefit tremendously from dedicating a portion of this revenue to support NBMG.

In closing, I can say with certainty that 10 years from now the preservation and strengthening of NBMG will be viewed as a matter of great wisdom during troubled times. It will not be easy but NBMG must be preserved if the University and the state of Nevada are to reach their potential.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lawrence A. Meinert". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial 'L' and 'M'.

Lawrence D. Meinert
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