

Ryan Thomas Murphy
833 Ashland Street
Houston, TX 77007
March 15, 2011

Dr. Jeffrey S. Thompson
Dean, College of Science
University of Nevada, Reno
MS-0424
Reno, NV 89557

Dear Dr. Thompson:

I am a 2004 graduate of the University of Nevada with a Master's degree in geology. My research was conducted under the guidance of Dr. James E. Faulds at the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology (NBMG). I write this letter to ask for your continued support for NBMG in the face of the crippling budget cuts that were recently proposed. I contend that such a significant funding loss in 2011 – and possible elimination of NBMG in 2012 – would irreparably damage the high standard of geo-science education which has long been a hallmark of the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering.

The NBMG offers a unique educational experience for Nevada students. Daily interaction with seasoned professional geologists and broad exposure to the social and industrial relevance of geologic research is invaluable. Few, if any other universities so efficiently bridge the gap between academic study and the real-world application of science. I selected the University of Nevada over several other Tier 1 research institutions in large part because of the alliance with NBMG. I was strongly recruited by the mining and petroleum industries during my final year of graduate studies and now have seven years of experience in the oil business. I attribute much of my success to the scientific rigor and professional ethics instilled in me during my research assistantship with the NBMG.

In addition to the arguments above, cutting NBMG funding does not appear to make good financial sense for the State of Nevada. For any given amount cut from the NBMG budget, Nevada stands to lose approximately twice that amount in supplemental research grants brought in by NBMG scientists. Leveraging taxpayer dollars for a 2:1 return is surely rare among state supported organizations. Perhaps dedication of some funds from Nevada's Net Proceeds of Minerals tax is an appropriate way to bridge the NBMG budget shortfall. This would be a sound investment in a group which is directly focused on promoting growth in the Nevada minerals industry and subsequently growing associated tax revenues into the future.

Thank you in advance for considering my point of view. The University of Nevada, its students, and the State of Nevada have much to gain by eliminating or significantly reducing the proposed budget cuts. I am proud of the legacy of the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering and equally proud of having been associated with the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology. Please do everything in your power to uphold that legacy for all University alumni, present, and future students in the geological sciences.

Sincerely,

Ryan Thomas Murphy
Senior Geologist
Hess Corporation