

From: Alan Wallace [mailto:wallacealan@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 3:12 PM
To: Marc Johnson
Cc: Milton Glick; Jonathan G Price
Subject: RE: NBMG

Hi Marc,

Thanks for the response. I was aware that many NBMG scientists are on soft money, some entirely, and I figured that they and their funding would be secure. One of the problems with that, though, is that soft money commonly comes from sources that don't necessarily fund some of the "meat and potatoes" services that are critically needed by the state, and, in my opinion, should be funded by the state. An NSF grant is always wonderful, but does it necessarily enhance the public's needs as much as need-based state funding?

The geoscientists at the NBMG and the Department of Geological Sciences and Engineering provide the university and state with strong, diverse expertise.

However, in my experience with both organizations, they have somewhat different purposes. One group principally focuses on education and research, and the other focuses primarily on the needs of the state.

There's no doubt that they overlap in many areas, but I fear that the state needs could suffer when only viewed within the context of departmental needs and goals. If such a merger is to take place, then I feel that the contributions to state needs (outside of teaching) should be fully recognized in the departmental mandate. At the USGS, we similarly had two

masters: one was research, and the other was service-type scientific work that supported the needs of other federal agencies. It was the former that led to promotions and recognition, but it was the latter that led to continued Federal funding and thus let the more esoteric research continue.

I see a potential parallel with the proposed merger, which is why it is critical to create a new paradigm for the combined group.

I don't envy any of you having to deal with the massive funding shortfalls that you face. It's clear that Nevada does not have the money to carry on even some of its most basic duties, so cuts have to be made somewhere to create a balanced budget. I just tend to view things in a cost/benefit manner and look at both how invested money will lead to benefits, and how a reduction of invested money can have greater negative impacts than the dollar figures in the budget might imply. Oddly, as pointed out in a recent article in the New Yorker, lean times are often the best times to invest in the future.

Best regards,
Alan

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From: Alan Wallace [mailto:wallacealan@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 16, 2011 1:52 PM
To: Milton Glick
Cc: Jonathan G Price
Subject: Support for the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology

Dear Dr. Glick,

During 31 years as a Research Geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, much of my work centered on the geology and mineral and water resources of Nevada. During that time, I frequently collaborated with the exceptional earth scientists at the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology. Based on my similar interactions with other state geologic surveys, the NBMG is, without question, the best such organization that I have encountered. The breadth and depth of the staff is recognized at both national and international levels, and the NBMG provides Nevada taxpayers and private industry with critical information that enhances the state economy and public safety.

Therefore, I was astonished to learn that the NBMG budget was to be cut by over 50 percent in the coming biennium.

I am sure that you're aware of the services that the NBMG provides to the state, but I want to highlight three contributions that, if eliminated or severely reduced, will have enormous negative impacts on the state and its residents. The first centers on public safety. The NBMG, in collaboration with the Nevada Seismological Laboratory at UNR, provides critical information on seismic safety. Dr. Craig dePolo of the NBMG was instrumental in coordinating the short- and long-term response to the Wells earthquake in 2008. This coordination included everyone from local gas and utility companies to insurance agents to earth scientists who could provide new information the earthquake hazards in that part of the state. Similar involvement by other NBMG scientists was critical during the Mogul earthquake swarm in 2008. As a result of all of this work, the Nevada public became more aware of earthquake hazards in the state and how to mitigate the effects on their homes and businesses. This increased awareness and mitigation will reduce the costs incurred during future earthquakes, cost savings that will translate into increased money that can be available for other critical private and public functions.

Second, Nevada is widely viewed as the Nation's center of geothermal energy. Development and use of this renewable energy source will, without a doubt, reduce the state's dependence on hydrocarbon fuels, increase the number of jobs related to this industry, and provide a stable, long-term source of locally produced energy. NBMG scientists have been leaders in the geothermal energy field, and their work over the past decade has significantly contributed to increased industry activity in the state, which has resulted in more jobs and tax dollars for the state. With increased need for renewable energy, this contribution will enhance the state's economy in future years.

Third, Nevada is the Nation's leading mining state, and it is one of the leading gold producers in the world. Gold receives the most attention, but the state's vast mineral resources also include critical commodities such as barite, diatomite, lithium, and silver. For years, geologists at the NBMG have provided fundamental geologic knowledge about all of these commodities, information that demonstrably has led to the discovery and development of new mines by private industry. Of course,

these activities have led to high-paying jobs, which translate into increased sales and business tax income for the state. In addition, the mining industry also requires a wide network of other businesses that include everything from fuel suppliers to housing and grocery stores for mine workers. Both mining and geothermal also provide high-quality jobs for UNR and UNLV graduates, not just in geology but also in accounting, engineering, public-school education, and human relations.

While the NBMG budget can be viewed as simply a line item in the state budget, one must consider the return on that investment to the state. Few state agencies can convincingly show that their work directly leads to increased revenues for the state in the form of jobs, infrastructure, and cost savings (such as reduced public and private costs related to improved seismic mitigation), not mention increased public safety. It is for this reason that I was dumbfounded that the state could consider reducing the funds for an agency that provides the state with far more economic and societal return than its budget might indicate. As a resident and taxpayer in the state, I feel as though I am getting my money's worth out of what really is a minor investment. I strongly encourage you to view the NBMG budget from the perspective of how its funding results in a stronger and more viable state.

Sincerely,
Alan R. Wallace, Ph.D.

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