

March 16, 2011

The Honorable Governor Brian Sandoval
Capitol Building
Carson City, NV 89701

I am writing this letter to offer my support for the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology (NBMG). The University of Nevada, Reno has announced plans to halve NBMG's current funding to help with the state's budget crisis.

At the moment, one only has to turn on the television or access the internet to see images and read the latest stories on the earthquake in Japan. Even with the immense size of the tragedy unfolding, I recognize that the outcome would have been even worse without the tsunami warnings that were transmitted immediately after the 9.0 earthquake off the coast. Many, many lives were spared as a result.

Obviously, Nevada is not threatened by ocean born tsunamis triggered by an earthquake. Nevertheless, Lake Tahoe is susceptible to lake sloshing or sieches resulting from earthquakes on active faults discovered in the depths of the lake. Like Japan and tsunamis, the earthquake-induced sieches may cause more casualties and economic loss than the groundshaking.

NBMG plays a major role in identifying potential earthquake hazards including the Lake Tahoe example above. Nevada has the second highest number of earthquakes behind California in the contiguous US. Preparedness for earthquakes in Nevada will significantly reduce the number of fatalities and economic loss. Preparing for earthquakes comes from the identification of earthquakes that has occurred in the geological past. These earthquakes will occur again in the future and with understanding of the local geology, allows us to run computer simulations of earthquake scenarios to come up with loss-estimation and gauge susceptibilities to critical infrastructures. For this and other great reasons, I am urging that the NBMG should be not subject to the proposed cuts.

Sincerely,

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