

Needs met by balanced lands bill

I write today to share my perspective as a former governor and senator representing the great state of **Nevada**. I am currently serving as an adviser to **Nevada** Copper, assisting it in securing approvals necessary for development of its mining project in Lyon County.

Nevada Copper owns the Pumpkin Hollow **Copper** Development Project just outside of Yerington. Pumpkin Hollow has mineral reserves that, once in production, will create hundreds of high-paying jobs and will be a boon to Northern **Nevada's** economy.

But there is no reason why we cannot achieve important environmental goals while also facilitating economic development that **Nevada** desperately needs.

Nevada Copper began construction in February and is already investing millions of dollars in the Pumpkin Hollow project, creating Northern **Nevada** jobs and invigorating the local economy. Even more Nevadans will be hired in the future after Congress enacts legislation conveying land to Yerington to expand the mine.

As a U.S. senator, I was privileged to work with **Nevada's** congressional delegation and diverse community interests to secure the enactment of balanced lands legislation, including wilderness designations and land conveyances for economic development throughout **Nevada**. I understand as well as anybody how important it is that balanced lands bills are crafted, from the bottom up, with local community support after an open process collecting stakeholder feedback. It is also important that local elected officials and the **Nevada** congressional delegation work together on lands legislation — collaboration generates trust and transparency and ensures that all interests and perspectives are carefully considered.

In Lyon County, we have a unique opportunity to achieve major economic development goals while also taking critical steps to protect sage grouse to avoid an Endangered Species Act listing. That may include conservation easements to protect the birds' habitat. It may also include a discrete wilderness designation, with necessary exceptions for fighting wildfire, protecting sage grouse habitat and protecting historical grazing rights.

Any actions which help prevent the listing of the bistrate sage grouse population is a benefit to ranchers, miners and public-lands management in Lyon County and throughout the entire West. Developing a balanced lands bill for Lyon County will help speed its approval through Congress.

Working together means one-on-one meetings with various interest groups and public meetings between elected officials and their constituents. It means members of the local community, including conservation-ists, miners, construction workers, sportsmen and government officials listening to each other. And it means crafting a proposal based on everybody's ideas and working with our congressional delegation to make it fit Lyon County.

None of this will get done without local community input, a public process, and the elected officials from the county and the congressional delegation working together.

I have been there, I have learned by trial and error, and I know what works. I am proud to be part of this process, and I look forward to working as a team to do what's right for **Nevada**.

*Richard Bryan was governor of **Nevada** from 1983 to 1989. He also served two terms in the U.S. Senate, 1989-2001.*



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