

Open Letter to Senator Harry Reid From Citizens of Lincoln County:

Honorable Senator Reid:

We are deeply concerned about the social and economic effect which the Lincoln County Land Act sales will have on our communities and our way of life. We are also concerned about the way the process leading up to the October 12 sales are being carried out.

When our County Commissioners were informed of our concerns they pointed out this is a BLM action and is taking place under a Congressional Deadline. We are grateful for your efforts to release land to improve the county's tax base and we appreciate all the hard work that you have done to facilitate this project. However, at this time we must respectfully request your help to postpone the sale until the concerns of county residents can be heard and addressed through an open process faithful to the spirit of NEPA AND FLPMA as well as other federal laws.

We are concerned about the ramifications of the Lincoln County Land Act. We are grateful for your efforts to return land to the tax base, however, the amount of land being disposed of completely away from our traditional population centers creates a massive new community on the county line. The density of the new community on the county line with 100,000 plus residents will quickly overpower the 4,000 residents that exist in the county. Our County Commission sees dollar signs and have been convinced this is an economic development project. It is, for Mesquite. For Lincoln County it is the destruction of their rural lifestyles, it is the shifting of values from rural to urban, it is the complete reversal of their current lives. While this may mean jobs in Mesquite, it will mean a dollar drain on the current taxpayers. It also means the imposition of urban ideals on a county that has held on to its rural roots. We need jobs, Senator, Yes we do. What we don't need is one more challenge for our fragile economy to overcome, and this would appear to be too much to overcome. The land act gives money to the BLM to acquire land, the environmentally sensitive land they seek is our only private property, this will further throw the county into flux.

There has been no open public process on this issue in Lincoln County. The general population was not able to participate in any of the scoping for the process, no planning hearings were ever held, and the public has not had adequate time to study the impacts both immediate and the future.

**ALL THE INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS, ALL THE SCOPING HEARINGS
AND EVEN THE SALES ARE IN MESQUITE. THIS IS THE LINCOLN
COUNTY LAND ACT AND MOST LINCOLN COUNTY CITIZENS DON'T
KNOW A THING ABOUT IT.**

The NEPA process for the Lincoln County Land Act was cursory, the comments prepared by the Lincoln County Public Lands Commission and the Lincoln County Planning Commission were suppressed by the Lincoln County Commission. In short, Senator, the sale needs to be held up for at least a year while the citizens of Lincoln County find out how this may impact them and if the land and its alleged tax increases are an acceptable price to pay for growth. Can we afford to provide services in the limbo between development and tax revenues? Can we afford to pay the satellite offices Clark County wages and then the current county employees as well because the county cannot discriminate against its workers?

This entire idea has not been well thought out and until it is, the whole project should be put on hold. Senator, we appreciate all the hard work that was done to facilitate this project, but the affected people were kept in the dark and they need time to approve or disapprove this massive change to our lives and livelihoods.

Senator, we know you were instrumental in getting this act passed, we know the deadline was so that BLM could not drag this out into decades, a good idea, one that needs more thought. Would it be too difficult for you to delay it for a year while the residents of the county study the good and bad and see how it will be balanced against our futures?

Letter to Senator Ried re: Lincoln County Land Act, 10-2-2001

Print name Donna Lytle Signature Donna Lytle

Address HC 74 Box 250 Pioche NV 89043 Telephone # 775-962-5211

Print name Ann Hamrick Signature Ann Hamrick

Address HC 74 Box 250 Pioche NV 89043 Telephone # 775-962-5207

Print name Sharon Hamrick Signature Sharon Hamrick

Address HC 74 Box 250 Pioche NV 89043 Telephone # 775-962-5207

Print name Donna Lytle Signature DONNA LYTLE

Address Pioche Nevada HC 74 Box 250 Telephone # 962-5392

Print name DAVE HORNBECK Signature Dave Hornbeck

Address HC 74 PO Box 200 Pioche Nev. Telephone # 962-5202

Print name Dorothy Hamrick Signature Dorothy Hamrick

Address HC 74 Box 250 Pioche Telephone # 962-5225

Print name JEAN RANKIN Signature Jean Rankin

Address HC 74-Box 263-6 Pioche NV Telephone # 775-962-5315

Print name JAMES RANKIN Signature James Rankin

Address HC 74 Box 263-6 Pioche NV 89043 Telephone # 775-962-5315

Print name Dorothy Thompson Signature Dorothy Thompson

Address HC 74 Box 262-1 Pioche NEV 89043 Telephone # 775 962 5444

Print name Roy Bardwell Signature Roy Bardwell

Address H.C. 74 Box 262-14 Pioche NV 89043 Telephone # 775-962-5536

Print name _____ Signature _____

Address _____ Telephone # _____

Print name GORDON LYTLE Signature Gordon Lytle 775-962-5304

Address HC 74 BOX 240 Pioche Telephone # _____

Print name Holly Kelly Signature Holly Kelly

Address HC 74 Box 250 Pioche Telephone # 775-962-5418

Print name Lisa Lytle Signature Lisa Lytle

Address HC 74 Box 250 Pioche Telephone # 775-962-5418

Letter to Senator Ried re: Lincoln County Land Act, 10-2-2001

Print name Betty J. LITTLE Signature Betty Little

Address HC 74 Box 240 Telephone # 725 962 5304

Print name David M. Wadsworth Signature David M. Wadsworth

Address HC 74 Box 280 Poché, ND. 58255 Telephone # 725 962-5261

Print name _____ Signature _____

Address _____ Telephone # _____

Print name _____ Signature _____

Address _____ Telephone # _____

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Address _____ Telephone # _____

John T. McEllan, Pioche

Shirley M. Scott
Pioche, NV.

William J. Hughes Sr

Doris Connell Pioche

R. Paul Pioche

William Hines Pioche

Janette Ann Pioche

James D. Pioche

Bill Sinker, Pioche

Lincoln County

Letter to Senator Ried re: Lincoln County Land Act, 10-2-2001

Print name Leannette Cottrell Signature Leannette E. Cottrell

Address Pox 334 Caliente NV Telephone # N/A

Print name Edna McWilliams Signature Carl McWilliams

Address Ben. DeWing Caliente NV 89005 Telephone # -

Print name Joe Gordit Signature [Signature]

Address _____ Telephone # _____

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Address _____ Telephone # _____

Lincoln County

NAME	ADDRESS
Mary E. Tibbets	Box 191 Caliente, Nev. 89008
Dorothy Freund	Box 241 Caliente NV 89008
Paul Freund	Box 241 Caliente, NV 89008
Margie W. DeGray	P.O. Box 366 Caliente, NV 89008
Clara Russell	Box 664 Alamo NV. 89001
Marionell P. Dufour	POB 614 Caliente 89008
Maria Widdiell	PO 61 Caliente NV 89008
Mildred Sheehart	PO 61 Caliente NV 89008
Maude Jarrett	PO 786 Caliente NV 89008
Ida W. Allen	PO 494 Caliente, Nev. 89008
John Martigan	PO 1025 Caliente, NV 89008
Dorothy Busby	P.O. 465 Caliente NV 89008
Diana Gray	P.O. Box 212 Caliente NV 89008
Mary Ann Burt	PO Box 782 " "
Shayne M. Bide	P.O. Box 132 Panaca NV. 89042
Doug Green	PO 34345 Caliente NV 89008
Janet P. Johnson	PO Box 426 Caliente, NV 89008
Patricia Elden	PO Box 317 Day Valley NV 89043
Freda M.	PO Box 841 Caliente NV 89008
(Name) [unclear]	Box 46 Caliente NV 89008

NAME	ADDRESS
Wendy R. Phillips	Box 354 Caliente, Nev. 89008
Donald K Phillips	Box 354 Caliente, NV 89008
Mathew Lang	P.O. 488 Pioche NV 89643
Sam J. Washburn	PO BOX 156 CALIENTE, NV 89008
Sharon A. Smith	PO Box #835 Panaca Nev 89443
Lisa Nelson	P.O. Box 813 Caliente, NV 89008
Ernest Lamborn	P.O. Box 143 Panaca, NV 89443
Clyde Lamborn	P.O. Box 143 Panaca, Nev. 89443
Tracy Strong	PO Box 315 Alamo, NV 89001
Michael Strong	PO. Box 315 Alamo, NV 89001
James Ray	P.O. Box 62 Hiko NV 89017
Jane Donohue	P.O. Box 205 Caliente NV 89008
Julia Nelson	P.O. Box 308 Pioche, Nevada
Judy Wojanuk	P.O. Box 32 Caliente NV 89008
Arnelda Arnoldus	p.o. Box 453 Caliente, NV 89008
Carl Arnoldus	Box 453 Caliente Ne.
Virie Budreau	PO 251 Caliente NV.
D J Budreau	PO 251 Caliente Nev
Barney B. Kline	P.O. 517 CALIENTE, NV 89008
Kathleen L. Kline	P.O. 517 Caliente NV 89008

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