



San Francisco
State University

Department of Geosciences
Geology – Meteorology – Oceanography

1600 Holloway Avenue, Th 509
San Francisco, California 94132

Tel: 415/338-2061
Fax: 415/338-7705
Website: <http://tornado.sfsu.edu>

March 21, 2011

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

Dear Dean Thompson,

I'm writing this letter out of deep concern regarding the severe funding cuts being proposed for the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology (NBMG) by the University and the almost certain, irreversible elimination of NBMG that would result. I am a University of Nevada alumnus, having earned both my MS (1991) and PhD (1996) degrees in the Department of Geological Sciences. As a graduate student at the University of Nevada, I was supported by NBMG as a Research Assistant on several different projects related to seismic hazards and liquefaction susceptibility of Clark County and the Reno-Carson City region. Dr. Stephen Castor (NBMG-Research Professor *Emeritus*) served on my MS committee. I am currently a tenured Associate Professor of Structural Geology and Neotectonics at San Francisco State University. I have served on the California Geological Survey (CGS) Geologic Mapping Advisory Committee since 2008. As a student and as a professional I have benefited immensely from NBMG as a tremendous resource of maps, reports, and facilities. As a professional I have continued my collaborations and published a number of manuscripts with NBMG faculty and staff on projects ranging from seismic hazards and geothermal exploration to paleoclimatology.

I am certain that I speak for the entire academic and private sector scientific communities in that it would be a tragic and extremely shortsighted mistake for the University to impose the severe funding cuts being proposed for NBMG. Cuts of this magnitude (>50%!) would almost certainly result in the elimination of the Bureau, which essentially serves as Nevada's State geological survey, the State's only research and public service unit. The State of Nevada is host to some of the greatest mineral resources on the planet (most of which are undeveloped), it ranks as the state with the 3rd greatest seismic hazards, and holds enormous potential for developing geothermal energy resources at a time when the nation urgently needs to develop alternative energy resources and reduce its dependency on foreign oil. So the services provided by the NBMG are particularly invaluable to this State and its citizenry.

Elimination of NBMG would be an irreversible blow to the State of Nevada in terms of public safety and ironically its potential for future economic growth. It would do away

with the only facility that serves to assess Nevada's natural hazards (e.g., earthquake hazards) and to educate the public and prepare communities for natural disasters. It would remove the only State unit responsible for producing, updating, and distributing the geologic maps and reports that serve as the critical foundation for exploring and developing Nevada's mineral and geothermal resources. The geoscientists at the Bureau also conduct pertinent and timely cutting edge research fundamental to advancing our knowledge of the State's geologic hazards and resources. The faculty of NBMG have also contributed enormously to the University community in the way of supporting and mentoring graduate student research and teaching courses such as Geology Field Camp, the culminating course for undergraduate geology students, in the 25 years of my connections to UNR. Additionally the NBMG faculty bring in millions of dollars of externally funded grants annually, which would be a great loss in revenue for the State and University were the Bureau to be eliminated.

It's no understatement that the wellbeing and safety of Nevada citizens and the potential for Nevada's future economic growth rely in no small measure on the unique set of services that Nevada Bureau of Mines provides. We hope that the University will carefully weigh the consequences of imposing funding cuts that would irreversibly eliminate this research and public service entity that has done so much for Nevada in the past and that means so much to Nevada's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Caskey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

S. John Caskey
Associate Professor of Geology
San Francisco State University