

Drs. Glick and Johnson  
President's Office  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Reno, NV 89557-001  
USA

20<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Dear President, Dear Provost,

**Support for the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology (NBMG) at UNR**

I was dismayed to hear recently of your proposals to reduce the funding of the NBMG to less than half of its present level, which will lead inevitably to diminution of its staff and capacity to do excellent and fundamental scientific research. As a geophysicist with two decades' international experience in natural hazards research, I am well aware of the importance of bodies like NBMG in conducting vital studies into areas like earthquakes, ground instability, and flooding, and translating this research into practical advice to protect your State's assets, residents and businesses. Also, I am aware of the potential for economic growth that arises from the provision of geoscience data as a public good, especially in a state such as Nevada that is rich in mineral and geothermal resources.

In particular, I am concerned on the effect that your proposals may have on my former colleague Prof. Geoff Blewitt, and his co-workers in the Nevada Geodetic Laboratory (NGL) within NBMG. Since moving from Newcastle University just over a decade ago, Prof. Blewitt has built up the NGL into a geodesy group of worldwide renown and much strength in depth. NGL members are highly regarded globally for their scientific endeavours and participation in international bodies; only last October I was privileged to be invited to a UNESCO-supported IGCP565 workshop hosted at UNR.

Like the rest of NBMG, the NGL has been very successful in attracting Federal and other out-of-state funding for its work (I believe the overall figure for NBMG is something like \$2 in external income for every \$1 of State funding). The vast majority of this revenue is spent within Nevada, directly or indirectly, so if NBMG is prevented from continuing in its current form this income may be lost to the State.

Of course, as Treasurer of the British Geophysical Association, and Chair of the steering committee for the UK Natural Environment Research Council's national Geophysical Equipment Facility, I am very aware that the current economic situation has affected funding for many institutions here in the UK just as it has in Nevada, and that you face difficult decisions in the short term. Nonetheless, I hope that you will do everything in your power to preserve the current strength of the NBMG.

Yours faithfully,



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