

March 17, 2011

Dear Dr. Jeff Thompson,

The purpose of this letter is to express my extreme disappointment in the proposed budget cuts that will adversely affect (essentially eliminate) the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology (NBMG). The thought that a state with a rich geological heritage such as Nevada would be without a state geological survey is unconscionable in my mind and would position Nevada poorly in future hazard mitigation and mineral exploration efforts. However, I am sure that you will be receiving many letters of support further discussing the many benefits provided by the NBMG to the citizens of Nevada in these areas. However, I want to make the case that the *educational* quality at UNR will be drastically compromised if the resources and expertise provided by the NBMG is lost by detailing my personal experience with the NBMG.

I received three degrees in Geological Engineering from UNR (B.S. 2001, M.S. 2004, Ph. D. 2008) and take great pride in the program that has served me very well thus far in my career. In 2008, I accepted an Assistant Professor of Geological Engineering position at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. I was offered this position directly out of graduate school with no post-doctoral experience (a rarity) and this would not have been possible without my extensive interaction with the expertise and resources provided by the NBMG.

In 2005 I began working with John Bell (NBMG Engineering Geologist) on several externally funded Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar projects, one of which would eventually become my dissertation topic. From 2005 until my graduation in August of 2008, I was funded exclusively through grants secured by Mr. Bell through the NBMG. The cutting edge research resulting from these grants allowed for detailed studies that were applicable to water management, mining, and other industries of

supreme importance to the state of Nevada. Further, I have been able to utilize the abilities and proficiencies I acquired through working with the NBMG in my current teaching position.

In a more general sense, I benefited from the expertise of the staff at NBMG through their collaboration with professors in the College of Science. NBMG geologists presented in several classes as part of the structured curriculum to give a 'real world' application and perspective. Seminars and brown bag lunches (I presented in the NBMG brown bag seminar series at least twice while a student) were another way in which students were able to see the application of their studies to problems facing the state.

I can confidently say that throughout my undergraduate and graduate career I benefited greatly from the close relationship between the Department of Geological Sciences and Engineering and NBMG and I think that the effectiveness and eventually the reputation of the natural sciences programs at UNR will be adversely affected by the proposed budget cuts. I also feel that this would send a message to alumni and other potential donors that the school is no longer committed to investing in the future of Nevada's wellbeing, has walked away from the university's roots and looks unfavorably toward one of Nevada's largest industries, mining.

If you care to discuss my personal experiences regarding the NBMG, please feel free to contact me.

Cheers,

Kurt Katzenstein, Ph. D.

Assistant Professor of Geological Engineering

Department of Geology and Geological Engineering

South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

Rapid City, SD 57701

Kurt.katzenstein@sdsmt.edu

(605) 394-5113