



rural development & land reform

Department:
Rural Development & Land Reform
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Chief Directorate: National Geo-Spatial Information

Private Bag X 10, Mowbray, 7705; Tel: 021-6584300; Fax: 021-6891351;
Van der Sterr Building, Rhodes Avenue, Mowbray, 7705

25 March 2011

The President & Provost
University of Nevada, Reno
RENO, NV 89557-0011
United States of America

Dear Drs Glick and Johnson,

BUDGET CUTS FOR NEVADA BUREAU OF MINES AND GEOLOGY

It is with great concern that I note the proposed cut of more than 50% in the budget of the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology. This proposal will be an enormous blow to a bureau that has contributed much to State, National and International Earth sciences and will effectively reduce the unit to a mere shell of its former self.

The University of Nevada, Reno states that one of its greatest strengths is its earthquake expertise. It goes on to say that, not only does the University have nationally and internationally known experts in seismology, geology, geodesy and civil engineering, but it is also home to one of the largest earthquake-simulation laboratories.

Geodesy underpins all Earth observation systems in much the same that the foundation of a house maintains its stability and strength. The ability of Earth scientists to measure geospatial elements of the Earth and their changes with time is dependent on geodesy. Geodesy has played an extensive role in the detection and monitoring of geo-hazards and this has been highlighted in very recent years during earthquake activity in Sumatra (2004 and 2010), Chile (2010), Haiti (2010), New Zealand (2010 and 2011) and most recently Japan (2011). Much research has gone into the application of geodesy towards a greater understanding of plate motions causing these disasters and possible solutions for the early detection and warning of impending disasters.

The Nevada Geodetic Laboratory, of which I am most familiar, is small with only four researchers and yet the impact made by this group on international geodesy and its contribution to the activities of the International Association of Geodesy and its flagship project, the Global Geodetic Observing System, has been considerable. The Geodetic Laboratory is at the forefront of many elements of this project including the detection and monitoring of geo-hazards.

The reduction of the NBMG budget by more than 50% will have dire consequences for the Bureau and the Nevada Geodetic Laboratory. In the interests of the University, Nevada and National and International geodesy, I appeal to you to reconsider your proposal to cut the budget of the NBMG.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. Wonnacott', with a small asterisk-like mark at the end.

R WONNACOTT
Director: Survey Services
Chief Directorate: National Geo-spatial Information