



Office of the  
**CHURCHILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

*Carl Erquiaga  
Pete Olsen  
Bus Scharmann*

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto  
Care of: Jennifer Crowe, N NV Director  
Kurt Englehart, Regional Rep. for Rural Nevada  
516 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jacky Rosen  
Care of: Nelson Araujo, State Director  
Travis LaChapelle, Deputy N NV Director  
144 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Delivered Via Email**

Dear Senators:

The Board of Churchill County Commissioners would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to you and your staff for your recent engagement with the county on the Fallon Range Training Complex Modernization Project (FRTC Modernization). The county has greatly appreciated the opportunity to share its support of the Navy and Naval Air Station Fallon, as well as its concerns with, and proposed solutions to, the FRTC Modernization.

The county continues to work with the Navy through its Environmental Impact Statement process, despite frustrations with the lack of appropriate mitigation being offered by the Navy. The county is also working with key stakeholders in developing Legislative solutions that result in a win-win outcome for both Nevada and the Navy. This includes development of a Churchill County Lands Bill Package (please see attached Resolution for the county's most recent position on the aspect of a larger mitigation package).

To that end, I and representatives from the county will be in Washington D.C. the week of September 9-13, 2019. We would welcome the opportunity to visit with each of you to discuss our recent progress. We would be happy to make ourselves available to meet with high ranking Navy officials and/or select members of the respective Armed Forces Committees as appropriate, per your advice and assistance in arranging such meetings. The county is also more than happy to make follow-up trips to Washington as necessary and/or to host meetings and field visits in Churchill County.

Please coordinate with County Manager Jim Barbee for specific appointments. Once again, I would like to thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to seeing you in Washington!

Sincerely,

H. Peter Olsen, Chairman

cc: Congressman Steven Horsford  
Congresswoman Dina Titus  
Congresswoman Susie Lee

Attachment: Resolution 285-2019 A Resolution Declaring Churchill County's Support of a Lands Bill Package for Churchill County Being Included as Part of the Fallon Range Training Complex Modernization Project Final Legislative Package

Recorded By: ALAWRY

## **RESOLUTION 285-2019**

BOARD OF CHURCHILL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
CHURCHILL COUNTY, NEVADA

### **A RESOLUTION DECLARING CHURCHILL COUNTY'S SUPPORT OF A LANDS BILL PACKAGE FOR CHURCHILL COUNTY BEING INCLUDED AS PART OF THE FALLON RANGE TRAINING COMPLEX MODERNIZATION PROJECT FINAL LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE.**

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,  
CHURCHILL COUNTY, NEVADA:

**WHEREAS**, the United States Navy has proposed the Fallon Range Training Complex Modernization Project (FRTC Modernization), which will require the approval of Congress through the National Defense Authorization Act and other related federal legislation; and

**WHEREAS**, the FRTC Modernization includes an additional withdrawal of approximately 430,000 acres of public lands within Churchill County, including:

- Approximately 186,000 acres proposed for closure to public access and discontinuation of multiple use management in lieu of Navy Training Range; and
- Approximately 244,000 acres proposed in the Dixie Valley Training Area where public access is proposed to remain open with significant restriction on future economic development activities and multiple use management; and

**WHEREAS**, the FRTC Modernization includes Navy acquisition of approximately 52,700 acres of private land within Churchill County; and

**WHEREAS**, the FRTC Modernization will have a significant negative impact on existing customs and culture that rely upon access to, and the continued multiple use management of, public lands within Churchill County; and

**WHEREAS**, the FRTC Modernization will have a significant negative impact on the County's future economic development projects that occur on both public and private lands; and

**WHEREAS**, a significant portion of Churchill County is comprised of a checkerboard land ownership pattern, whereby alternating sections of private and public lands:

- Greatly restrict the ability of the US Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation to effectively manage public lands; and
- Hamper public access to both public and private lands; and
- Suppress economic development of said lands; and

**WHEREAS**, resolution of checkerboard lands through conveyances, direct sales or exchanges requires funding to complete appropriate: cultural and environmental studies, appraisals, surveys and conveyance of title; and

**WHEREAS**, Churchill County supports designation of a "Checkerboard Land Resolution Area" and process for consolidation of appropriate land within the checkerboard land resolution area as well as a funding mechanism for completing such consolidation; and

**WHEREAS**, Churchill County views H.R. 252 of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress entitled "Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act" as a model for resolving checkerboard land ownership. For Churchill County, this approach should include any land within the Resolution Area administered by the Bureau of Reclamation in addition to the Bureau of Land Management; and

**WHEREAS**, Churchill County contains three Wilderness Study Areas in their entirety:

- Stillwater Range Wilderness Study Area (94,607 acres); and
- Job Peak Wilderness Study Area (90,209 acres); and
- Clan Alpine Mountains Wilderness Study Area (196,128 acres); and

**WHEREAS**, Churchill County contains portions of two other Wilderness Study Areas:

- Augusta Mountain Wilderness Study Area (89,372 acres); and
- Desatoya Mountains Wilderness Study Area (51,262 acres); and

**WHEREAS**, the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada State Office, published a Nevada BLM Statewide Wilderness Report in October 1991 that recommended the following:

Stillwater Range Wilderness Study Area (0 acres recommended for wilderness and 94,607 acres recommended for non-wilderness)

Job Peak Wilderness Study Area (0 acres recommended for wilderness and 90,209 acres recommended for non-wilderness)

Clan Alpine Mountains Wilderness Study Area (68,458 acres recommended for wilderness and 127,670 acres recommended for non-wilderness)

Augusta Mountains Wilderness Study Area (0 acres recommended for wilderness and 89,372 acres recommended for non-wilderness)

Desatoya Mountains Wilderness Study Area (43,180 acres recommended for wilderness and 8,222 acres recommended for non-wilderness)

**WHEREAS**, Chapter 12, Policy Plan for Public Lands of the Churchill County Master Plan contains a stated goal of *Immediate Congressional designation action on all WSAs and special or restrictive land classifications based on Churchill County policy to release these areas for multiple use management and in the interim prevent, minimize or mitigate impairment or degradation of such areas to the extent that Congressional actions are not preempted. Provide the amenities promised by wilderness designation through multiple use management that includes dispersed recreation where appropriate and opportunities for solitude. Further, as discussed within the Master Plan, Churchill County is committed to future development of mining, communication infrastructure, and energy production. Locations for many of the future developments cannot be identified at this time; therefore all currently available land must remain available and not be included in Wilderness Areas, Roadless Areas, ACEC, or other restrictive designations; and*

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners recognize that Wilderness Areas and/or National Conservation Areas can be designated in a manner that protects critical natural resource values while avoiding areas critical for continued access, multiple use management and future economic development; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners will not support designation of Wilderness Areas and/or National Conservation Areas that:

- Eliminate or encumber existing grazing permits and rights;
- Include existing mineral claims as of the date of this resolution;
- Include any private property without maintaining access to said property;
- Close any existing roads currently open for administrative and public access;
- Encumber maintenance or development of existing water rights or wildlife guzzlers;
- Eliminate recreational hunting, fishing or trapping as managed by the State of Nevada;
- Include modeled high potential geothermal resources on the accessible alluvial fans on either side of the Stillwater Range, Clan Alpine Mountains, Augusta Mountain and Desatoya Mountains; and,
- Eliminate overflight and aerial training by the United States Navy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners will support designation of National Conservation Areas and/or Wilderness Areas that:

- Limit impacts to current and future land uses that are important to the County's customs, culture and economy;
- Conserve important cultural and natural resources as enumerated in the County's Master Plan; and,
- Provide opportunities for primitive recreation or solitude where appropriate.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,**

1. The Board of County Commissioners supports development of a lands bill package for Churchill County that would:
  - a. Establish a process and funding mechanism for resolution of the checkerboard land ownership pattern within the County, including an initial appropriation from the Department of Defense to fund initial checkerboard land resolution projects; and,
  - b. Resolve existing Wilderness Study Areas in the County by either releasing said areas to the Bureau of Land Management for non-wilderness management or designation as National Conservation Area or Wilderness Area as appropriate to avoid the above listed conflicts.
2. The Board of County Commissioners strongly believes that passage of such a lands bill is a valid mitigation, insofar as it is part of a larger mitigation package, to offset a portion of the significant negative impacts of the FRTC Modernization.
3. The Board of County Commissioners views the National Defense Authorization Act as an appropriate legislative mechanism to pass such as lands bill package given the direct nexus with the FRTC Modernization Project.
4. The Board of County Commissioners requests that a copy of this resolution be provided, upon passage, to:
  - a. The Nevada Congressional Delegation;
  - b. Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak;
  - c. The Nevada Association of Counties; and
  - d. The Appropriate Navy Officials.

PROPOSED AND ADOPTED this 21<sup>st</sup> day of August 2019.

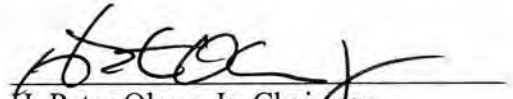
THOSE VOTING AYE: Carl Erquiaga

Harry Scharmann

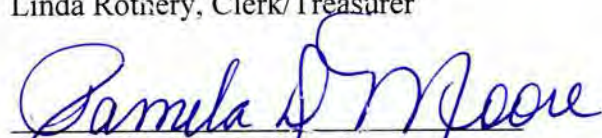
H. Peter Olsen, Jr.

THOSE VOTING NAY: N/A

CHURCHILL COUNTY BOARD  
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
H. Peter Olsen, Jr. Chairman

ATTEST:  
Linda Rothery, Clerk/Treasurer

  
Deputy Clerk to the Board