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NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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**Testimony of the Nevada Association of Counties
Before the Assembly Committee on Education
On Senate Bill 150
April 28, 2003**

Introduction. Senate Bill 150 addresses a situation concerning an abandoned school building in White Pine County. The County wishes to sell the school property to save taxpayer dollars and also as a matter of public health and safety. There have been offers on the property, but such offers could not be accepted by the County because NRS 293.240 prohibits the sale of school district property at below appraised value. SB 150 would allow such sales if a bid that is equal to or above the appraised value is not received.

Justification for SB 150. White Pine County currently spends approximately \$20,000 in operating funds per year on vacant facilities. This is expected to increase to approximately \$60,000 annually because a new K-12 facility was built in Lund leaving an older high school and elementary school vacant. This money is spent to provide minimal maintenance on the building and to keep the power and water on. Money is also spent to provide patrols to the area.

SB 150 is also crucial in terms of public safety. On a regular basis, abandoned schools are targets for vandals. The White Pine County facility has been broken into several times and evidence of paper torches have been seen scattered throughout the building. With many exits boarded up, this poses a significant risk to the vandals if the paper torch were to ignite the facility. The interiors and exteriors have been spray painted with graffiti and windows, light fixtures, and other items have been broken. Additionally, abandoned facilities may contain asbestos, mold, bacteria, and other materials that can become airborne and adversely affect a person's health.

Passage of SB 150 would allow the County to dispose of the property to a responsible owner for development or demolition. This would benefit the county fiscally and benefit the community in terms of public safety.

Explanation of SB 150. SB 150 would amend NRS 393.270 to provide that if a bid equal to or greater to the appraised value of the property is not received at three consecutive open meetings of the school board of trustees at which the property disposal is properly noticed, than the board of trustees may accept the highest bid, even if the bid is for an amount less than cash market value. (Under current law, sealed bids are taken for property, but all must be rejected if none are at or above the appraised value).

Conclusion. SB 150 is a measure designed to save taxpayer funds and contribute to the health and safety of citizens. NACO urges prompt and favorable consideration of this important piece of public policy.

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ASSEMBLY EDUCATION
DATE: 4/9/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT C
SUBMITTED BY: ANDREW LIST