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WASHOE COUNTY

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March 31, 2003

To the Members of the Assembly Government Affairs Committee:

Washoe County supports a Regional Plan process that provides for representation of all affected constituents and promotes consensus building. Assembly Bills 379 and 380 are two bills that, in concept, have been supported by the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners for several years.

The voting issue raised by A.B. 379 and the sphere of influence/annexation issue raised by A.B. 380 were the subjects of bills in the 2001 legislative session. At Senator Raggio's request, the entities agreed to try and work out the various issues relating to Washoe County's regional planning law without legislation (the 2001 bills were "indefinitely postponed"). Further, the testimony of the City of Reno and the Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency was that the issues would be addressed through the update of the Regional Plan that, at the time, was underway.

Unfortunately, the issues related to regional planning are on-going. An updated Regional Plan was adopted last May after numerous hearings and a final hearing of over 8 hours. A majority of the testimony provided at the hearing requested changes to the plan – particularly with regard to the proposed expanded spheres of influence for Sparks and Reno. Issues raised during that testimony were not considered for amendment to the plan; instead the plan was adopted with a statement that the concerns would be addressed at a later time. While one County Commissioner voted with the 7 City representatives to adopt the plan based upon, in her words, "trust the issues would be fixed", that Commissioner is no longer on the County Commission – in the opinion of many, because of her Regional Plan vote.

Subsequently, the County filed suit – the third of three lawsuits spawned by controversy over the application by the Regional Agency or the City of Reno of the regional planning law. A settlement agreement was reached, in part because of the recognition by the County Commissioners of the chilling effect any prolonged litigation would have on the broader community. The essential piece of the settlement agreement was to create a "cooperative planning" process in the expanded spheres of influence. Criteria were to be developed and applied to those areas. The entities are now in a dispute resolution process over these criteria.

Regional planning in the Truckee Meadows has been subject to controversy for years. Regional planning can work only if there is consensus as to a community vision and consensus with regard to how impacts of growth will be handled with regard to existing residents. Washoe County believes that a requirement of an affirmative vote of each of the represented entities on the Regional Planning Governing Board (*not addressed in the current language of A.B. 379*) is necessary to assure the consensus document necessary to our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Madelyn Shipman
Assistant District Attorney

ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
DATE: 3-31-03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT K
SUBMITTED BY: MADELYN SHIPMAN