

## DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or [library@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:library@lcb.state.nv.us).

My name is Robert Curtis. I am a resident of Spanish Springs and a member of the Spanish Springs Action Committee. I want to thank you for letting me speak today in support of Senate Bill 200.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain why this bill is not only important to me as a homeowner in the effected area, but as a representative of 1723 other homeowners who signed a petition in opposition to the originally proposed cost of the Spanish Springs Valley Nitrate Remediation Project.

We were told that the cost to the homeowners could escalate to over \$20,000.00. Because of a directive issued by the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection for mandatory sewerage in certain areas of Spanish Springs. Due to rising nitrate levels in our wells and because of the possible health issues associated with them we were now being ordered to sewer or the County would face staggering fines for not being compliant. As a direct result of the directive our land values were depreciated by the County Assessors office until the sewerage is completed. This has caused realtors to suppress their enthusiasm about selling homes in Spanish Springs. Thus, making it difficult for homeowners to attain fair market value for their homes.

This Proposed cost of this project has caused elderly homeowners on fixed incomes, single parents and those of us living paycheck to paycheck to fear losing their homes. In simple terms \$20,000.00 is a down payment on a house, a college education for a child or the cost of a new automobile that provides transportation back and forth to work. Spanish Springs has no Rapid Transportation service so, every family needs a form of transportation.

Over the past five years the residents of Spanish Springs and Washoe County have endured huge water rate increases, utility

E1 of 4

ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS E1-4  
DATE: 4/28/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT E  
SUBMITTED BY: Robert Curtis

increases and gas increases. We have been taxed for the PCB clean-up in downtown Reno and the Flood Control project that extends all throughout Washoe County. We are paying for schools, libraries and parks to be erected and then maintained. I could go on but you get my point. Most families have at least two people working and it just isn't enough. Many people do not receive cost of living increases to keep up with the tax increases.

As homeowners we are concerned about the quality of our water and do realize that we are equally responsible for protecting it. Once the directive was issued we expected that we would have to pay our fair share and find no argument there. What we did not expect was a financial burden that would lower our property values, strip away all the equity that we had amassed in our homes and cause a stigma in the resale of our homes.

Our situation is extraordinary. We have been directed by the State, ( NDEP ) in a directive to sewer. The infrastructure was not in place like it is in other areas where the homeowners could just tie into existing lines when those lines came between 200 to 400 feet of their property lines. The infrastructure had to be built at a significant cost to the State, Federal and local governmental agencies. The homeowners were being told that they would have to pay for that infrastructure to be built in order to tie into. Without funding the homeowners cost was unrealistic.

At this point in time, we as homeowner's who bought their homes in Spanish Springs, still have State and County Health Department approved septic systems. It is extremely important that legislation be passed that hold developers and landowners accountable for abiding by current codes. It is unrealistic that because the property was bought before let's say 1990 that they therefore do not have to be compliant with current codes. It should not matter whether the property was bought before 1990 or

not. This law makes it possible to still build subdivisions on lots under 5 acres and install septic systems. This is what happened in Spanish Springs.

The County Health department permitted 499 septic systems in a four mile radius. Later the acceptable number became 99. The homeowner's had no knowledge of this fact and did not know that years down the road that they would be directed to financially remedy this error in judgment.

We feel that a partnership between the Federal, State, local governments and homeowners is the only realistic approach to addressing the State's directive of compliance. We as homeowners want to comply with the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. We want to know that our drinking water supply is safe for all who drink it. We also want the State and the Federal government to acknowledge that our septic systems were approved at the time of sale and now through this directive by the NDEP are deemed unacceptable. This equates to great financial burden for the homeowners.

As homeowners in the effected area we feel that the State, (NDEP), and the Washoe County Health department who originally approved the septic systems and the Federal Government who slated the guidelines share equal responsibility with the homeowners to improve our water quality and adhere to the regulations set forth in the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

We come before you today in unanimous support of Senator Washington's bill. It provides great relief to the homeowners. It is a fair and equitable solution to complying with State directives. This is not just a band aid for Spanish Springs. SB 200 encompasses a community, a County and the State. We look

forward to working together with our County, the State of Nevada and the Federal government. We feel that this is landmark bill with teeth to really help people from facing financial ruin.

We would like to thank Senator Reid, Senator Ensign, Congressman Jim Gibbons, Mr. Bradhurst and his staff, Mr. Biaggi, our County Commissioners and our Citizens Advisory Board for taking the time to understand just how important this issue is to homeowners all over the State of Nevada. We would also like to thank Senator Washington for purposing such a bill on our behalf and fulfilling his promise to his constituents.

We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in the process and for the great support we received from all the entities involved. We thank you for your time and what seems to be a real solution to a once very unpleasant situation. Thank You All.

Robert Curtis  
30 N. Spring Mountain Circle  
Sparks, Nevada 89436  
425-2704  
The Spanish Springs Action Committee