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MARK S. ROSENZWEIG, PH.D.

March 25, 2003

Assemblyman Harry Mortenson
c/o Nevada Assembly
401 S. Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Re: Support for AB 131

Dear Assemblyman Mortenson:

I am writing to express my continued encouragement for you to support AB131. Expanding growth and development in many areas of the state is placing more individuals in proximity to sensitive heritage resources. The result is increased impact to these non-renewable resources through intentional vandalism, unmanaged recreational activities and natural processes. As has been successfully demonstrated in Arizona and other states for many years, a formal Site Steward Program, such as the one presented in AB131, supports land managing agencies in their mandated responsibility to preserve and manage significant resources by "watch-dogging" sites most at risk.

Site Stewards, as presented in this bill, do not manage resources or land use activities. Nor do they monitor permitted activities or conduct surveys for new sites. These activities are, and will remain, the responsibility of the land managing agencies. The Site Steward Program will simply assist land managing agencies by organizing and training volunteers to visit and monitor impacts to already known significant resources as assigned by the agency contact. Because they have already been identified and determined to be important, these sites fall within the scope of existing agency resource protection policy. As things stand now, legitimate, permitted activities are not to be allowed to be conducted if they impact significant resources. Those conducting illegal or unpermitted activities can have no expectation of being allowed to operate in sensitive areas. Site Stewards monitoring sites do not change this.

Site Stewards will not restrict legitimate activities. On the contrary, Stewards may enable expanded use of some areas. If land managers are confident that sites are not being

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ASSEMBLY NATURAL RES., AGRICULTURE & MINING
DATE: 3/26/03 ROOM: 3161 EXHIBIT C 1-2
SUBMITTED BY: Terri Robertson

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impacted through negligent or incidental activities associated with permitted uses in nearby areas, they may be willing to allow activities closer to sensitive sites. Regular monitoring by stewards may give them that confidence.

A growing segment of the Nevada community has recognized and is becoming increasingly concerned about the frequency of significant impacts to sensitive heritage resources. Currently, several groups, including Archaeo-Nevada Society, Nevada Archaeological Association and Nevada Rock Art Foundation, are working with land managing agencies to establish a Multiple Agency Site Monitoring Program to begin some of the activities presented in AB131. This program is not intended, and cannot, take the place of the true statewide program of AB131. It is a temporary measure which is an attempt to help land managing agencies manage significant resources until a statewide program can be developed and implemented.

In closing I would like to reiterate that Site Stewards, as established under AB 131, would monitor impacts to significant and known sites as assigned by the land managing agencies. These are sites which have already been identified as being at risk. Stewards will supplement land managing agencies resources by assuming one specific task, the periodic inspection of their assigned site, thereby freeing agency staff to more adequately and timely address other responsibilities, such as permitting of new projects and developing more current and appropriate management plans. The end result is better management of agency lands and resources for all users.

Please feel free to contact me for additional information or to further discuss this important and time sensitive issue.

Sincerely,



Mark Rosenzweig