

Assistant Democratic Leader

Senator Harry Reid

Southern Nevada

Special Report

I appreciate the challenges facing Esmeralda, Lincoln, and Nye Counties and am committed to doing everything I can to help them improve the quality of life of their communities. I have been working on a number of initiatives to promote economic development, expand and improve health care, support education, and improve transportation services throughout southern Nevada.

Economic Development

I have been a leading advocate of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which helps ensure that our local governments are fairly compensated for losses to their tax base that result from the presence of federal land in their communities. This program assists local governments in providing critical services to their citizens and gives them the resources to invest in their economic future. Last year, I helped secure nearly \$348,000 for Esmeralda County, \$1.4 million for Lincoln County, and \$5.37 million for Nye County.

Earlier this year, the entire Nevada congressional delegation worked together to introduce public lands legislation to help promote economic development in Lincoln County. The legislation authorizes land sales and designates utility corridors to spur economic growth and expand the tax base in Lincoln County. This measure builds upon the success of the Lincoln County Land Act, which made thousands of acres of land available for business and residential development in the Mesquite area.

During the current Congress, I also passed the Small Business Drought Relief Act, which would expand drought relief to small businesses that have suffered substantial economic harm from droughts, including businesses in Esmeralda County.

Improving Health Care

I want to make better health care available to every Nevadan by cutting costs, improving quality, and expanding access. I want to tell you about a few initiatives that I have been working on to improve health care in southern Nevada.

I have secured funds to improve health care services throughout rural Nevada, including \$500,000 for Nevada Rural Hospital Partners telemedicine program to enable them to use better technology that will help bring telemedicine to a greater number of rural Nevada communities. When this program is fully implemented, thousands more rural Nevadans will be able to consult with doctors in Las Vegas and around the country without leaving their local hospitals.

I also have been fighting to improve Nevadans' cancer care. I helped write the law that made Lincoln County residents eligible for up to \$75,000 in compensation for developing cancer from fallout from the Nevada Test Site. Lincoln County residents had been unfairly excluded from the original 1990 law. There is also a great need for a leading edge cancer center conducting research and providing treatment for Nevadans so they do not have to travel far away for care. That is why I have secured millions of dollars in federal funding to help create the Nevada Cancer Institute, which will serve all Nevadans.

It is critical that we take care of the health care needs of our veterans. I worked hard to open the new veterans clinic in Pahrump, which will reduce travel times and provide better access to doctors, medicine, and other health care resources for local veterans. It is also important to establish 24-hour health services in Nye County, and I was pleased to be able to secure funds last year for a new ambulance.

Expanding Educational Opportunities

As someone whose life was transformed by education, I am strongly committed to providing a high quality education to all of our children. I understand the unique educational challenges facing Nevada's rural communities. During a meeting earlier this year with school superintendents from around the state, I heard that rural counties desperately need new school buses – so I introduced a bill that will pay 75 percent of the cost of new buses for rural school systems.

I also have been working hard to expand computer access for rural students. Students increasingly need computer skills to compete for jobs, but rural schools often do not have access to high technology. I was glad to help secure more than \$111,000 in funding to supply laptop computers to Dyer Elementary School. These computers are available for students to use at school and at home and will ensure that these Esmeralda County students have the technological skills to succeed in our increasingly technologically-based economy.

Transportation Investments

As a resident of Searchlight, I appreciate the transportation challenges facing small, rural communities throughout southern Nevada. I strongly support rural transportation programs and secured \$900,000 in last year's Transportation Appropriations bill for rural transit – on top of the \$2 million I secured for such programs the previous year. This funding will both invest in rural transit infrastructure, including bus facilities and vehicles, and help defray the costs of service to rural Nevadans.

For more information visit my Web-Site at <http://reid.senate.gov>