

Dear Sagebrush Ecosystem Council Members

As I am sure you are aware, the state we all call home, Nevada, has astonishingly the greatest percentage of **public lands** within its borders. 43 million acres or a staggering 80% of Nevada is comprised of public lands. Consequently, no other state is more heavily impacted when a major ruling is made concerning our public lands and what can take place on them.

While Nevada can boast its vast land size, which ranks 7th in the country, we unfortunately have one of the highest unemployment rates of all 50 states, (5.1% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics for April 2024). Our economy ranks 32nd in the nation and is growing. However, if we wish to remain on this positive economic trajectory, we need to ensure that the state can continue to grow by providing good paying jobs for the next generation.

The tourism industry in Nevada is one of the largest revenue generators in the State. 43% of our total GDP can be attributed directly to tourism. People from all over the world come to Las Vegas and Reno for gaming and entertainment. Others flock year-round to our state parks and lakes to ski, hike, boat and rejuvenate. These millions of visitors each year travel to Nevada to spend their disposable income in our State, thereby enriching the lives of Nevadans in the process.

But an ominous cloud of media and global press releases have recently highlighted a much darker side of our State that is occurring on our public lands. Wild horses with broken backs and legs being pursued by helicopters. Young foals dropping dead in 100-degree heat from exhaustion while being chased. Coyote Killing Contests which is contrary both to sound science and public opinion are taking place in our backyards. And all this killing, both of wild horses and other wild species is happening on our **public lands**.

This begs the question – are we living in a state where the will of the people, their economic well-being and their future economic certainty are being prioritized over a select few who benefit handsomely from lucrative taxpayer contracts, as in the case with wild horse roundups, and others who enjoy state sanctioned killing contests of animals purely for pleasure. I would argue that Nevada needs to proceed very carefully and mindfully with regards to prevailing public opinion. News travels very fast nowadays and our economy, jobs and improving economic conditions rely heavily on how others perceive our state. Our economic well-being and reputation may very well be seriously and irreparably damaged by a few ignorant (stupid) people. It is up to our state elected officials to correct this destructive trajectory before it is too late!

Anamaria Boustred, Carson City, NV
anamaria@soqueltech.com