

Churchill County  
Agenda Report

Agenda Item: Letters Received: C  
Agenda Date Requested: February 7, 2008

Date Submitted: January 25, 2007

To: Board of Churchill County Commissioners  
From: Pamela D. Moore, Administrative Aide to the Board of County Commissioners  
Subject Title: Letter from U.S. Senator Harry Reid concerning the 2007 Farm Bill, H.R. 2419.

Type of Action Requested: (check one)  
 Resolution  Ordinance  
 Formal Action/Motion  Other – Informational Only

Does this action require a Business Impact Statement? No

Recommended Board Action: None.

Discussion: Letter from U.S. Senator Harry Reid concerning the 2007 Farm Bill, H.R. 2419. The letter highlights the positive aspects of the legislation.

Prepared By: Pamela D. Moore Date: January 25, 2008  
Pamela D. Moore, Administrative Aide

Reviewed By: Brad Goetsch Date: 28 Jan 08  
Brad Goetsch, Churchill County Manager

Rusty Jardine Date: 1/29/2008  
Rusty Jardine, Churchill County Civil Deputy Attorney

Alan Kalt Date: 1/29/08  
Alan Kalt, Churchill County Comptroller

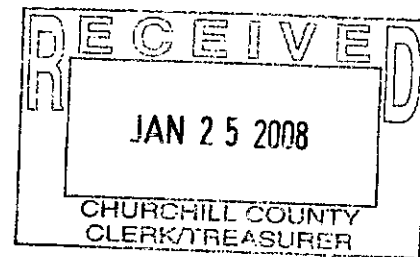
Board Action Taken:  
Motion: \_\_\_\_\_ 1) \_\_\_\_\_ Aye/Nay  
2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Vote Recorded By)

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

January 8, 2008



The Honorable Gwen Washburn  
Churchill County Commission  
155 N. Taylor Street, Suite 110  
Fallon, Nevada 89406

Dear Commissioner Washburn:

In light of our shared support for rural Nevada's economic and environmental well-being, I am writing today to update you on recent actions in the United States Senate that will have positive effects on our state. On December 14, 2007, the Senate passed legislation that will provide critical support to Nevada's rural communities and ranchers, while also providing hungry kids and seniors with healthy food. While we still have work to do to ensure these priorities remain in the bill through conference, I am proud to tell you of this important accomplishment and how it benefits Nevadans.

The 2007 Farm Bill, H.R. 2419, is an important piece of legislation that affects far more than our nation's agriculture policy. It keeps conservation a centerpiece of our agriculture policy by providing farmers and ranchers incentives to preserve millions of acres of wildlife habitat and sensitive ecosystems. It helps our nation achieve its goal of energy independence by providing over \$1.1 billion towards the development of clean-burning biofuels for our nation's automobiles. It also authorizes food assistance programs that low-income children, families, and seniors in Nevada currently rely on to meet their food needs.

Many of the 2007 Farm Bill's nationwide initiatives will benefit Nevada, for example:

### ***NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEVADA'S RANCHERS AND FARMERS***

Nevada has been a great example of how conservation has preserved the American landscape, and the 2007 Farm Bill invests over \$4 billion in new money for conservation. Some of the highlights include:

- Funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program is increased to address unmet needs of farmers and ranchers across the country. Through my leadership, this program will focus more on the environmental health of rangeland and wildfire presuppression efforts will be eligible for grants.
- The bill protects the Wetlands Reserve Program and the Grasslands Reserve Program through 2012.
- Establishes a framework for participation in greenhouse gas offset markets.

- The Emergency Conservation Program and Emergency Watershed Protection Program will continue through 2012, helping communities restore landscapes damaged by wildfires.
- Ranchers will be able to access permanent disaster assistance for losses caused by drought or wildfire.
- \$426 million will be invested in specialty crops, allowing states like ours to develop Nevada grown business initiatives.

### ***ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT***

The Farm Bill will not only help secure our nation's energy independence, it will help rural Nevadans integrate renewable energy into their farm and ranch operations and will help meet the needs of our rural towns and communities. Some examples are:

- Funding to help small public water facilities comply with federal and state environmental regulations is increased to \$20 million.
- \$230 million is provided for expanding the development of farm-based energy through Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (REAP) grants and loans. This program is expanded making it easier for farmers, ranchers, and rural small businesses to improve their use of clean energy, such as solar power.
- \$40 million is included for technical assistance and microloans for rural entrepreneurs.
- \$50 million is provided for rural hospitals, focusing on equipment, so fewer Nevadans will have to travel for medical treatment.
- Another \$40 million will be invested in rural day care facilities.

### ***HEALTHY FOOD FOR NEVADA'S FAMILIES***

I am very pleased that the Farm Bill makes such a commitment to provide nutritious food for our neediest families and our children. In Nevada, the Farm Bill will help meet the food needs of more than 176,000 low-income families. A program important for many of these Nevadans, the emergency food assistance program, or TEFAP, will also receive additional funding to ensure that local food banks will remain supplied.

One of the issues that the Senate considered during its debate was how to better provide nutritious food to our children. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which will receive \$1 billion in funding, does just that. Currently limited to only 14 states, this program will be expanded to include all fifty states, helping schools give their students nutritious food choices.

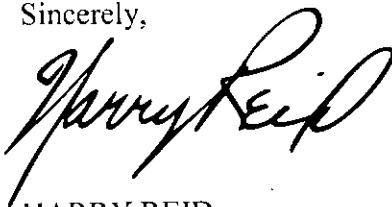
One provision of particular note is the reauthorization of the Desert Terminal Lakes Program. This critical initiative has already done much to restore Nevada's Pyramid and Walker Lakes. With the passage of the 2007 Farm Bill, an additional \$200 million will be available to continue these efforts. Already, hundreds of Nevadans, including researchers from the University of Nevada, Reno, Desert Research Institute, local stakeholders, and federal, state, municipal, and tribal officials have dedicated themselves to the goal of restoring our unique desert lakes. I am glad to do my part to help them meet this challenge.

The 2007 Farm Bill is a massive piece of legislation, and my colleagues are to be commended for their commitment to seeing it passed before the end of the year. A spirit of bipartisanship made this legislation possible. Around the state I have heard people voice their hopes that our nation's agricultural policy will do more to help Nevada. Many stakeholders advocated reform of our country's current farm safety net, and the Farm Bill does include important reforms. Although I supported several amendments to the bill bringing additional reform, none of them gained the support they needed to be included in the bill. In the end, though, I am pleased with the results and I believe this bill is a step in the right direction. I will continue to fight for Nevada's priorities in the Farm Bill as it moves through conference, and eventually to the President's desk.

If you would like more information about this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

My best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Reid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "H".

HARRY REID  
United States Senator

HR:ct