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Nevadans Against Garbage seek federal intervention

Written by Dee Holzel/Photos by Michael Michaelsen

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WINNEMUCCA — Representatives of NAG (Nevadans Against Garbage) presented the Regional Planning Commission with a letter sent to the Environmental Protection Agency, and various other agencies, seeking federal intervention in the process of permitting the proposed Jungo Rd. landfill. The letter was read aloud at the Thursday (Feb. 11) meeting of the RPC.

It's not the first time members of the community have sought a higher authority on the issue. Last year Senator Harry Reid appropriated federal funding for a USGS water study after constituents approached him with concerns. The \$1 million study has been funded but is not yet underway.

Members of NAG read the letter that called for further studies concerning fugitive dust, potential water contamination and possible impacts to wildlife. The letter indicated the federal government should have jurisdiction because the property abutting that owned by Jungo Land & Investments is managed by the BLM.

However, there have been no official replies to the letter.

The land on Jungo Rd. under review for development of a Class I landfill is actually on private property; therefore, no environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA) are required as those documents are functions of the federal government. Recology has declined to fund an environmental impact review because they're already doing everything that is required of them by state and federal regulations.

Jim French, who is not a member of NAG and who declared he did not attend the meeting in an effort to halt construction of the landfill, expressed concern the required regulations don't go far enough – especially with the potential impact to wildlife.

French was formerly a biologist with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, but is now retired. French and the RPC include a requirement that a comprehensive environmental impact review be completed by Jungo Land & Investments as a requirement of the CUP extension.



As has been the case before, the program provided the job of the RPC was to review and approve the Commission's

member Rich Brown pointed out many of the issues raised in the letter are under the jurisdiction of the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) who are responsible for the permits issued for air, water, and eventually the landfill.

“We don’t permit landfills,” Brown said and later added, “NDEP are the air-quality folks – they issue the landfill permits.”

French reiterated that wildlife impacts are being left out of the studies including: a species list, migration patterns, a impacts to each species. However, Commission member Bob Edwards pointed out that NDOW is aware of the project and has the ability to act if they have concerns, which they have not done.

French said it wasn’t politically correct for NDOW to act now – that they would come into the process during the compliance-side. French argued the issues should be looked at prior-to and at the very least an EA (Environmental Assessment) should be required.

“How would it get reviewed?” Edwards asked. French replied NDEP would review it. As Edwards noted, NDEP is already the reviewing agency.

No additional requirements were added to the extension of the CUP.

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