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EMC0488

From: Mark Howell, Chairman, Starr Valley Conservation District

Subject: COMMENTS for Draft Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States. Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

1

Noxious and evasive weeds have become the new scourge of the West and in order to have any sort of control over this problem, we must work together to control the problem before it truly does get out of control.

2

Being on a ranch in the rural part of Nevada, we are slowly being inundated by more and more of these noxious and evasive weed varieties. When driving along county, state and interstate roads a person can't help but notice that the existing weed areas are becoming larger and new areas are appearing all the time. Even with more people becoming dedicated to controlling this problem, it seems that it's an uphill battle. This includes the BLM lands. If we were to stop or limit the use of herbicides on these areas, the results could be catastrophic creating hardship for anyone that borders these lands.

3

It's for these reasons that I strongly support the approval and implementation of Alternative B, since it sets forth the most available set of tools to combat the threat of noxious and evasive plants on BLM land. I agree that initially greater amount of acres will need to be treated, but over time if these areas are contained the overall acreage should be reduced.

4

As for the other alternatives listed in the Draft BLM EIS, they do not provide viable solutions to the threat caused by invasive plants. In the case of fire, I believe it's sometimes a step backward because it allows the invasive weeds such as thistle varieties, knapweeds, etc. to get a foothold on the burned regions. Unless, of course, the use of livestock can be used effectively on some sort of limited basis to help in the control these invasive weeds through grazing,

5

Early detection and rapid response to these invasive plants must be addressed. Only through the education of identifying these plant species to mapping them through some sort of GPS system, and destroying them through spraying or mechanical means will we finally be able to get some sort of control over this growing problem in the West.

Thank you,

Mark Howell