

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-7012

October 08, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretaries Salazar and Vilsack:

One of the key natural resource management issues we face in Nevada today is pinyon-juniper encroachment. The spread of these trees must be met with a multi-agency, landscape-scale approach. Your involvement in this effort is key since the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service (USFS) manage tens of millions of acres in Nevada.

The expansion of pinyon-juniper woodlands over many decades has seriously degraded wildlife habitat for species ranging from the mule deer to sage grouse. Further, the dense growth of pinyon-juniper poses widespread risk of catastrophic fire that could sterilize soils and threaten historic sites, private property and established communities. Finally, pinyon-juniper forests consume tremendous amounts of water, which deprives other plant and animal species in the region and can dry up valuable seeps and springs.

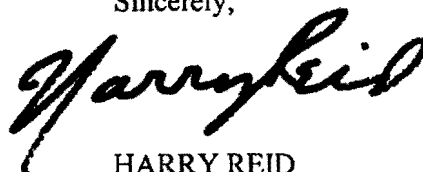
These impacts can be effectively addressed only by landscape-level planning and action. Such action would create jobs through commercial development opportunities associated with a reliable supply of excess woody biomass.

A diverse group of stakeholders and federal, state and local agencies in Nevada are already championing a project of this sort. I support their efforts and stand ready to work on related legislation and on securing the funding needed to carry out this critical endeavor.

Addressing the pinyon-juniper issue in Nevada will require an unprecedented local, state, and federal partnership in addition to significant collaboration between public and private entities. Nevadans are eager to meet this challenge, but we need your help. I ask that the Departments of Interior and Agriculture join together with key Nevada stakeholders to implement a landmark pinyon-juniper demonstration project in east-central Nevada.

I look forward to working with you and your agencies to get an effective restoration effort in place as soon possible. Please contact me or my staff at (202) 224-3542 if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



HARRY REID

United States Senator