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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY

Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act of 2019

Oral Statement of Director David Bobzien

July 25th, 2019

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, House Natural Resources Committee

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, my name is David Bobzien and I'm honored to serve as Governor Steve Sisolak's Director of the Nevada Governor's Office of Energy.

The mission of the Governor's Office of Energy is to ensure the wise development of Nevada's energy resources in harmony with local economic needs and to position Nevada to lead the nation in: renewable energy production, energy conservation, exportation of energy, and transportation electrification.

Nevada supports the goals of the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act of 2019. We thank the sponsors of this bill for introducing the legislation and to the subcommittee for today's hearing. I appreciate the opportunity this morning to share context for the legislation from a state energy office perspective.

As an early adopting state, Nevada's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) was enacted by our legislature in 1997. The RPS establishes the percentage of electricity sold by an electric utility to retail customers that must come from renewable sources. Nevada's RPS began with the, at the time, ambitious goal of two tenths of one percent renewable energy by 2001. Over almost every subsequent session, it has been the subject of legislation strengthening the standard to facilitate the growth of our state's clean energy economy and jobs.

A large part of how our state's investor owned utility has met this requirement has been through the development of utility-scale solar, geothermal and wind projects to procure energy from renewable resources. Many of these projects have been sited on federally-managed public lands in our state.

As members of the committee are aware, public lands in Nevada are plentiful, and provide a wide array of values to Nevadans and all Americans. As someone who cherishes the hunting, fishing, hiking and camping opportunities I enjoy on public lands in Nevada with my friends and family, I, as do many Nevadans, recognize the pressures our land managers face in balancing these values.

To be clear, renewable energy development can have impacts on the habitats of a variety of species found in Nevada: bats, desert tortoise and sage-grouse to name a few. At the same time, scientists are already documenting the impacts of our region's warming on species.¹ It is important that tools needed by land managers to address and mitigate these impacts are maintained in order to achieve balance in the development of renewable energy. Elements of the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act do just that.

This past Nevada legislative session, in acknowledgement of the climate crisis before us, our state, similar to many other states, increased its RPS to a more aggressive 50% by 2030. To achieve this goal, as well as further develop our clean energy economy by exporting renewable energy electrons, many more utility-scale projects will be needed on public lands.

Nevada applauds Section 9's renewable energy goal of 25 gigawatts by 2025. Setting a national target for renewable energy is a worthy endeavor, and sets a useful metric by which to track the success of this legislation and its implementation.

For context, in Nevada, through our state's renewable energy tax abatement program, we're currently tracking more than 3 gigawatts of renewable energy projects, either up and running or to be completed by 2021. This includes 319 megawatts of geothermal, 2,217 megawatts of solar, and 150 megawatts of wind projects. I would note that while many of these are on public lands, not all of them are. Additionally, the total megawattage tracked by our program represents just over half of all renewable energy power plants in Nevada. To date, the projects we're tracking have brought \$7.9 billion in payroll, taxes and capital investment, and over 9,000 construction jobs to our state.

Regarding other sections of the bill, as the Secretary of Interior proceeds with the development of supplements to the sector-specific programmatic environmental impact statements as directed by Section 4, Nevada appreciates the coordination with state governments outlined in Section 4 (f). In particular, coordination with state energy offices such as mine will prove beneficial to this effort.

Nevada has good working relationships with our BLM state office, but recognizes the limited staffing resources that impacts the agency's attention afforded renewable energy. The Program to Improve Renewable Energy Project Permit Coordination established in Section 6 will be

¹ "Mojave Desert birds have suffered major collapse over the past century, scientists say," Arizona Republic, August 8, 2018. <https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-environment/2018/08/08/mojave-desert-birds-decline-linked-climate-change/916835002/>

beneficial and we look forward to engaging with that effort. In addition, Nevada appreciates the opportunity afforded our Governor to be a signatory to the memorandum of understanding outlined in Section 6 (b)(2).

Finally, Nevada supports and appreciate the disposition of revenues to the states found in Section 10 (a).

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony and I'd be happy to respond to any questions the subcommittee might have.