

LANDER COUNTY

COUNTY MANAGER

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November 19, 2025

Electronically Submitted to

Vinson Guthreau

Executive Director

Nv NACO

RE: Westerman Amendments to H.R. 4776 "SPEED Act"

Lander County, NV is pleased to support Congressman Westerman's amendments to H.R. 4776 "SPEED ACT" that encourage local voices be included in the decision making process through Cooperating Agency status.

Rural counties in states such as Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Oregon, and others are uniquely and disproportionately impacted by federal land-management decisions. Unlike metropolitan areas, many of these counties have 70–90 percent or more of their land area under federal ownership or control. Federal planning and project decisions directly affect local tax bases, emergency services, water systems, transportation corridors, school funding, and the very viability of communities. Lander County is made up of over 80% federally managed lands.

Cooperating-agency status is a mechanism for:

- Incorporating on-the-ground data (road inventories, grazing records, wildfire history, local water rights, and cultural resource knowledge) that federal agencies frequently lack;
- Reducing needless conflict and delay by resolving issues early in the scoping and alternatives-development phase rather than during protracted litigation; and
- Ensuring compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) mandate in 43 U.S.C. § 1712(c)(9) that the Secretary of the Interior "coordinate the planning process with local governments" and give "appropriate consideration" to local land-use plans

Experience has shown that when rural counties are granted cooperating-agency status, NEPA documents are stronger, records of decision are more durable in court, and relationships between federal agencies and local communities improve dramatically. Conversely, when counties are excluded or relegated to “commenter” status, the process breeds distrust, encourages obstruction, and too often ends in unnecessary litigation.

Thank you for improving the SPEED Act with Congressman Westerman’s amendments.

Sincerely,

Pam Harrington

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Natural Resource Officer

Lander County, Nevada