



FRIENDS of NEVADA WILDERNESS

**Testimony of Shaaron Netherton  
Executive Director  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness**

**Hearing on S. 1411 “Lander County Management and Conservation Act”  
October 19, 2021**

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto  
Chair, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining  
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Lee  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining  
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cortez Masto and Ranking Member Lee:

Friends of Nevada Wilderness is dedicated to preserving all qualified Nevada public lands as wilderness, protecting all present and potential wilderness from ongoing threats, educating the public about the values of and need for wilderness, and improving the management and restoration of wild lands. Friends of Nevada Wilderness has been working on wilderness protection and public land legislation since 1985.

I write this supporting testimony on behalf of Friends of Nevada Wilderness and would like to express my appreciation for Senator Rosen’s leadership in continuing to work with rural counties like Lander County to resolve public lands issues and to protect public lands for future generations. Nevadans know how to come to the table in good faith and work together to develop comprehensive bills that enhance economic development, conserve public lands, improve recreation opportunities, and preserve Nevada’s rural way of life.

As a long time, Nevadan who has lived in both rural and urban parts of the state, working on public lands bills across the state has given me a deep appreciation for the broad spectrum of people that call Nevada home. Working together with county commissioners, ranchers, landowners, sportsmen, miners, biologists, recreationists and townspeople has helped me understand that that while we all have differences, we share more in common than what divides us. In general, Nevadans care deeply about their public lands. Through recreation and

work these lands help shape who we are as Nevadans. We care about quality of life for ourselves and our kids and grandkids, we care about having good habitat for our diverse wildlife, and we care about the wide-open spaces and want to see these lands managed well.

Nevada has a solid history and track record of stakeholders and lawmakers working together to find common ground on our public lands.

### **Wilderness in the Lander County Management and Conservation Act**

S. 1411 would:

- Designate as Wilderness, portions of the Desatoya Range and the Augusta Mountain wilderness study areas.
- Rename the Augusta Mountain WSA to the Cain Mountain Wilderness. The boundaries and the name are consistent with introduced legislation for Pershing and Churchill County as well.
- Adjust boundaries of WSAs to resolve longstanding management concerns and conflicts.
- Allow Lander County to settle the long-standing uncertainty of wilderness study areas that are partially in Lander County.

The Desatoya Range Wilderness Study Area is located in both Lander and Churchill counties with the county boundary along the mountain crest. Friends of Nevada Wilderness has worked with ranchers and biologists to resolve management conflicts yet provide Wilderness protection for the bulk of this beautiful area. It is an area rich with riparian areas and associated fish and wildlife species. It is popular with hikers and is easily accessible.





The Augusta Mountains Wilderness Study Area is located at the corner of three counties (Pershing, Churchill and Lander). Friends of Nevada Wilderness has worked with stakeholders and elected officials in all three counties to resolve concerns and to provide Wilderness protection for the massive Cain Mountain. The Middle Triassic deposits in the Augusta Mountains have yielded one of the North America's richest and most diverse faunas of marine reptiles. These beds feature an excellent state of preservation of the fossil material. Wilderness designation will help protect these valuable resources and allow for continued scientific research and study of these unique marine reptile fossils.



Chair Cortez Masto, I appreciate your co-sponsoring this legislation. Thank you both for considering our support of this legislation and I urge you and all the subcommittee members to move this legislation forward.

Sincerely

Shaaron Netherton, Executive Director