Statement of

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

Before the

United States Senate

Committee on Indian Affairs

October 7, 2015

Concerning

S.1436, the ‘Nevada Native Nations Land Act.’

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding S.1436, the Nevada Native Nations Land Act. To Senator Reid, Senator Heller and other members of the Nevada delegation, we wish to thank you for your work on this bill.

The Department supports the bill as it applies to lands managed by the Forest Service. We defer to the Department of the Interior for matters concerning land administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Section 3(b) of the bill would transfer approximately 82 acres of land administered by the Forest Service to be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Shoshone Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. The parcel is located within the Humboldt-Toyaibe National Forest.

The 82-acre Mountain City Ranger Station Administrative Site identified for conveyance is within a larger 750 acre withdrawal established in 1959 by Public Land Order (PLO) 1796, which reserved the withdrawn lands for numerous administrative and recreation sites. The Mountain City Ranger Station Administrative Site contains a hay shed and corral constructed in 1940 on the east side of the highway; a water well, water and wastewater systems, and a wastewater treatment lagoon, two houses, the oldest originally being constructed in 1958 are still on the subject site. Later buildings constructed on the site that are still there include a duplex, one modular single-family home, a double-wide barrack, a double-wide single-family home with detached garage, and a single-wide mobile home. A second water well was constructed in 1992.

A total of 11 structures, including the 1940 hay shed, and two water wells are included in the proposed acquisition.

We have several recommendations for your consideration that we would like to work with the Committee and sponsor to address. We recommend that the bill address the Forest Service’s continued need to use roads located on the parcel for administrative purposes.

We also recommend that the bill specify that all facilities and other infrastructure on the 82-acre parcel transfer to the Tribe.

This concludes my remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.