TO: NV Senator Pete Goicoechea 775-684-1447 / 775-684-6560 FAX
FROM: Judith E. Holmgren 775-727-1119 [VOX & FAX]
DATE: February 11, 2015
SUBJECT: Bills 65 and 81 submitted by the NV Division of Water Resources

Let me preface by saying that I am an alternate member of the Basin 162 Groundwater Advisory Committee and I am cognizant of situations of which the general public is only recently becoming aware.

As a taxpayer in Nye County I am concerned with the over-allocation of “water rights” by the State Water Engineer’s Office to the extent of some 40,000 acre-feet of non-existent annual recharge. I became concerned, when I learned that Nye County invested some $100,000 in “water rights” at $10,000 each and lost 70% of that investment, when the price of “water rights” fell to approximately $3,000 each. Nye County was not the only entity “burned” by investing in “water rights.” Members of the Basin 162 Advisory Committee, who are representatives of utilities, are also concerned about financial loss with respect to “water rights,” especially those termed “over-allocated,” for which no wet water in the form of annual recharge exists. In short, the bills submitted should be modified to specifically address this particular circumstance as fraud. Claiming that “sharing” water with domestic well owners is a strategy to “bring the aquifer into balance” is not the real purpose of the submitted bills, nor does it “balance” the aquifer. The true purpose is to “cover” the fraud perpetrated by issuing “over-allocated water rights,” particularly, those that were issued and retained with full knowledge that no recharge volume existed to back them. A study prepared for the State Water Engineer’s Office by Montgomery Engineers of Nevada (Las Vegas) entitled “Water Supply for the Future of Southern Nevada” published 1971, surveying available water in selected basins, i.e., Pahrump Valley, Amargosa Desert, Railroad Valley, Pahranagat Valley, and Virgin Valley, documented 12,000 acre-feet (per year) of recharge for Pahrump Valley. That document suggests that Pahrump Valley (Basin 162) could sustain a population of 27,000, “if the water consumption averages 400 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) and if agriculture is curtailed.” (Emphasis added; q.v.,