



Nevada Legislature

SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION

COMMITTEES:

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SHEILA LESLIE

ASSEMBLYWOMAN

Washoe No. 27

MAJORITY WHIP

June 18, 2008

The Honorable Jim Gibbons
Governor of Nevada
101 North Carson Street, Suite 1
Carson City, Nevada 89701-4786

Dear Governor Gibbons:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the sudden call for a meeting of the Economic Forum this Friday to prepare economic projections on which you will then ask us to base budget cuts. I am extremely concerned about the validity of the numbers they will develop, given the very short time our fiscal staff will have had to prepare the data on which the projections will be based.

As you know, our legislative fiscal staff must review, analyze, and prepare a significant amount of complex information in preparation for each meeting of the Economic Forum. This process typically takes at least three weeks in order to gather, analyze, and prepare the data for presentation to the Forum membership.

You will be asking the Legislature to make decisions about budget cuts that will impact the lives of Nevadans and will have ramifications for our State for decades, based on these hastily determined projections. It is incomprehensible to me that you would expect to have reliable numbers on which to base these major decisions when our staff has had only four days of lead time, while they are simultaneously assisting us in researching and preparing information for the Special Session you have indicated you will be calling for next Monday.

Legislative Counsel Bureau staff is known for its high quality work product; sloppy work is not acceptable to the Legislature or our staff and it is exceedingly frustrating to be placed in this position. Our highly professional staff will produce the very best product they can under the extreme time constraints you have imposed, but I believe the Economic Forum members, the Legislature, and the public deserve much better.

The fact that four of the five members of the Economic Forum are new appointees and have never participated in this process only adds to my concern.

DISTRICT OFFICE:

825 Humboldt Street, Reno, Nevada 89509-2009

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING:

401 S. Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747 • (775) 684-8845 • Fax No. (775) 684-8533 • www.leg.state.nv.us

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We began the week with one projected shortfall number; it is our understanding that your Budget Director will release another projection today and you are asking the Economic Forum on Friday for yet another projection—all in haste to call the Legislature into Special Session.

The Legislature created the Economic Forum precisely to avoid the politicization of economic projections. Your demand for a meeting in just four days threatens the validity and reliability of that process. I urge you to reconsider your actions, and instead utilize the customary process of developing consensus revenue projections that allow the Legislature's fiscal staff and Executive Branch staff adequate time to review accurate data and properly prepare the necessary information in a rational, unbiased manner.

Sincerely,



Sheila Leslie

Nevada State Assemblywoman

SL/av

cc: Senator William J. Raggio, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Steven A. Horsford, Senate Minority Leader
Assemblywoman Barbara E. Buckley, Speaker of the Assembly
Assemblywoman Heidi S. Gansert, Assembly Minority Leader