



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 24, 2018

DATE: April 3, 2018

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: David Solaro, Arch., P.E., Assistant County Manager
(775) 328-3623, dsolaro@washoecounty.us

SUBJECT: Approve a Cooperating Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Washoe County and the Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of the Interior, to participate as a cooperative agency in the development of an Environmental Impact Study for the Burning Man event; and authorize Assistant County Manager David Solaro to execute the MOU. (Commission District 5.)

SUMMARY

Black Rock City (BRC) has requested a ten-year permit from the Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior (BLM) to produce the Burning Man event in the southern part of Nevada's Black Rock Desert from 2019 through 2028. The requested permit requires development of Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1508.18). As provided in the requested memorandum of understanding (Attachment A), Washoe County will provide feedback in the development process of the Environmental Impact Study within areas of expertise (40 CFR 1501) identified as infrastructure, traffic and public safety.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Proactive Economic Development and Diversification and Infrastructure.

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action.

BACKGROUND

Black Rock City (BRC) has requested a ten-year permit from the Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior (BLM) to produce the Burning Man event in the southern part of Nevada's Black Rock Desert from 2019 through 2028. The requested permit requires development of Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1508.18). BLM will evaluate the potential environmental and human impacts if Black Rock City grows over a 10-year period to a size of 80,000–100,000 people, stays the same, or does not happen at all.

The National Environmental Policy Act provides for participation of cooperative agencies in the process (40 CFR 1501). As a cooperating agency, Washoe County will

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provide feedback in the development process of the Environmental Impact Study within areas of expertise (40 CFR 1501) identified as infrastructure, traffic and public safety.

Participation includes assisting in the preparation and review of the EIS as requested by the BLM, providing responses to data requests or review of comments in areas of expertise, and providing feedback on potential areas of concern during the scoping process. Preparations of the EIS are currently underway and the process is anticipated to end in April of 2019 (Attachment B).

Participation as a cooperating agency through the EIS process does not negate ongoing annual required special event business licensing permit processes for special events with Washoe County.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact identified outside of staff commitment. Participation in the process as Cooperative Agency provides an opportunity to avoid costs associated with additional impacts to Washoe County.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board of County Commissioners approve a Cooperating Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Washoe County and the Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of the Interior, to participate as a cooperative agency in the development of an Environmental Impact Study for the Burning Man event; and authorize Assistant County Manager David Solaro to execute the MOU.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to approve a Cooperating Agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Washoe County and the Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of the Interior, to participate as a cooperative agency in the development of an Environmental Impact Study for the Burning Man event; and authorize Assistant County Manager David Solaro to execute the MOU."