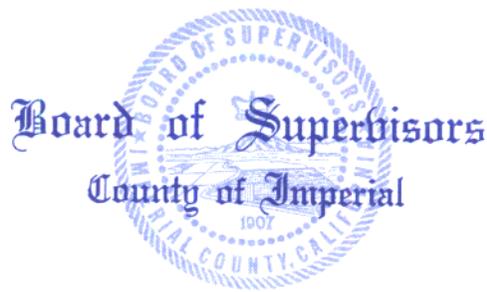


WALLY LEIMGRUBER  
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January 11, 2005

Mr. John Hamill, DOI Coordinator  
Desert Managers Group  
222 East Main Street, Suite 215  
Barstow, CA 92311

Dear Mr. Hamill,

It has come to our attention that a debate has emerged regarding public participation and input at the quarterly meetings of the Desert Managers Group (DMG). We encourage you to consider local government as a partner with your organization, rather than in the context of either an interest group stakeholder, or as an adversary.

Initially the DMG was organized following passage of the California Desert Protection Act to facilitate communication among the Federal and State agencies, including Department of Defense installations, having desert land management responsibilities. This was an appropriate response to the breadth of the CDPA in changing land use and expanding administrative responsibilities of some of the agencies. For several years most were unaware of the even the existence of your organization. In recent years, however, it had become more visible and provides a central clearing house for many issues and much information regarding natural resource management and public lands in the desert region.

Our County, and others, has commenced attendance and participation through our regional organization. QuadState County Government Coalition. Our Executive Director had kept us informed of the issues and actions that the DMG has addressed. He has also offered input to the DMG on issues appropriate to our interests.

After first encouraging public attendance and participation, recently the DMG has restricted stakeholder participation. While we understand the need for managing public participation, we feel that the guidelines imposed in your June 16 directive, and affirmed in your August 9 letter, are not appropriate to local government.

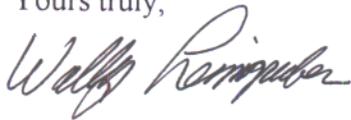
Counties in the region undertake a variety of activities with direct relationship to DMG member agencies, solid waste management, road maintenance, signing representation of constituent and land interests, and planning and land use authorizations on private lands intermingled with the Federal estate. Counties also provide liaison through their membership to a variety of State and Regional organizations not otherwise represented in the DMG such as Air Quality Districts and responsibility of many of your members, do have accountability to an electorate, and do have a strong regulatory role to play with the desert region.

I propose that the Desert Managers Group consider the appointment of one or more local government representatives to the active Board. In this way we can be assured full participation in the presentations and deliberations, and assure that the DMG can have the reflected input of local government so it may be blended with that of your Federal and State representatives.

If the prospect of having up to six local government representatives seems unwieldy, perhaps the DMG might look at either an approach such as BLM's District Advisory Council (DAC) with one or two county representatives appointed with extended terms; or name our regional representative from the QuadState Coalition as a representative on our behalf, while allowing or encouraging County Supervisors to sit in a co-member when meetings are in their jurisdictions or when issues of local importance are on the agenda.

I encourage you to review participation in the DMG and consider county government as a partner in your process with interest that mesh with those of your member land management and resource agencies. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the thoughts of your group relating to membership and participation.

Yours truly,



Wally Leimgruber,  
County of Imperial Supervisor  
District 5

Cc: Mike Pool, State Director, BLM  
Steve Thompson, California/Nevada Operations Manager, FWS  
Jon Jarvis, Regional Director, National Park Service  
Senator Dianne Feinstein, United States Senate  
Senator Barbara Boxer, United States, Senate