

# **Draft Letter for Consideration by the State Board of Prison Commissioners**

**December 17, 2012**

## **Agenda Item VI**

**Submitted by Glen Whorton**

Ken Salazar  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Salazar:

The purpose of this document is to apprise you of the support of the people of the State of Nevada for the nomination of the Nevada State Prison as a national historic site. This nomination is put forward in recognition of the Prison's social, architectural, and geologic contribution to the history of the State of Nevada.

Socially and governmentally, this nomination recognizes that the Nevada State Prison was the first agency created by both the Territorial, and State Legislatures. The site has been continuously occupied and used by the State of Nevada since 1863. The facility closed earlier this year. This facility and its staff served the goal of public protection for the citizens of the State throughout that time. In its long history there have been significant and interesting incidents which would alone make it suitable for nomination as a historic site. The old institution had a significant influence upon the operation of State Government because of its importance to public safety and its influence upon the fiscal management of our State. Interestingly, the site was originally a hotel adjacent to a natural hot spring. This was the temporary residence of many of the territorial legislators in Carson City, and as a direct result, the site was purchased for use as a prison. In fact, the proprietor of the hotel was the Prison's first Warden.

Architecturally, the site served as a quarry for stone building materials which were used in government buildings, commercial buildings, and private residences throughout Carson City. Indeed, one has only to drive through our capital city to see the material impact of this early prison industry upon the architecture of our community. The capital building in which we sit today, completing this letter, was constructed of stone quarried at the Nevada State Prison by its inmates. The prison has undergone development over its 150 year history and today serves as a veritable and physical representation of the development of prison architecture in the United States.

The Nevada State Prison has long been known to be a rich site for geologic and paleologic study. Recognition of the scientific value of the site was demonstrated in the 1880's with the discovery of fossilized footprints. Today, fossilized bones can readily be seen in the areas quarried for building materials. Given the closure of this institution there has been a great deal of scientific interest in exploiting this site for the purposes of research.

Please accept this document has support from the owners of the Nevada State Prison, the people of the State of Nevada, as support for the designation of the site as a national historic site. Your support of this nomination would be greatly appreciated by the people of our State.

Signature lines