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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nevada Cattlemen Association Statement on Cattle Gather in Southern Nevada

(Elko, NV) April 16, 2014 – The Nevada Cattlemen's Association believes that private property rights are at the foundation of our country and our liberty, and we know that the rule of law protects those property rights. Our policy supports private property interests that exist on public lands, including water rights and grazing rights. We also support the continued multiple use of public lands, as authorized by law and confirmed by the courts. It is under this framework of the rule of law that our property rights and multiple uses are protected.

The multiple-use statutes allow timber, grazing, wildlife, recreation and other uses to carry on side-by-side in a way that, as the statute reads “will best meet the needs of the American people.” Increasingly, we see the federal government placing higher priority on uses other than grazing. This not only violates the multiple-use statutes, it violates the grazing and water rights that are also protected by laws such as the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA). Under the TGA, ranchers have a right to graze livestock on federal lands based on historical utilization. While this property interest is complex by nature--given that it exists on surfaces owned by the federal government—it is nonetheless a real property interest that is taxed and saleable. It must be protected. On the same token, ranchers who exercise their grazing rights are obligated to pay a grazing fee as established by law.

Ranchers such as Mr. Bundy have found themselves with their backs against the wall as, increasingly, federal regulations have infringed on their public land grazing rights and the multiple use management principle. This is not only devastating to individual ranching families; it is also causing rural communities in the west to wither on the vine. In the west, one in every two acres is owned by the federal government. Therefore, the integrity of the laws protecting productive multiple use is paramount to the communities that exist there.

The situation in Nevada stands as an example the federal agencies' steady trend toward elevating environmental and wildlife issues over livestock grazing – in violation of the abovementioned laws and principles. Well-intentioned laws such as the Endangered Species Act—which are factors in Mr. Bundy's case--are being implemented in a way that are damaging to our rights and to our western families and communities. In Bundy's case the designation of his grazing area as a critical habitat for the endangered desert tortoise gave the BLM the rationale

they needed to order a 500% decrease in his cattle numbers. There never was any scientific proof that cattle had historically harmed the desert tortoise.

However, in accordance with the rule of law, we must use the system set forth in our Constitution to change those laws and regulations. Nevada Cattlemen's Association does not condone actions that are outside the law in which citizens take the law into their own hands.

Nevada Cattlemen's Association (NCA) works hard to change regulations detrimental to the sound management of public lands in a lawful manner and supports the concept of multiple uses on federally managed lands and encourages members of the livestock industry to abide by regulations governing federal lands.

Furthermore, Nevada Cattlemen's Association supports effective range management through collaboration with resource management agencies and interested parties to achieve rangeland management goals for economically viable ranch operations and the conservation of wildlife species.

With the above stated this case was reviewed by a federal judge and a decision was rendered to remove the cattle. Nevada Cattlemen's Association does not feel it is our place to interfere in the process of adjudication in this matter. Additionally, NCA believes the matter is between Mr. Bundy and the Federal Courts.

We regret that this entire situation was not avoided through more local government involvement and better implementation of federal regulations, laws, and court decisions. While we cannot advocate operating outside the law to solve problems, we also sympathize with Mr. Bundy's dilemma. With good faith negotiations from both sides, we believe a result can be achieved which recognizes the balance that must be struck between private property rights and resource sustainability.

The Nevada Cattlemen's Association is a non-profit trade association that was established in 1935. We provide a means for Nevada's cattle industry to present a united front on issues that impact us all. Our mission is to promote a dynamic and profitable Nevada beef industry which represents the interests of its producers and consistently meets the consumer's needs while increasing Nevada's market share. The Association works hard to protect private property, vested water and grazing rights. We achieve this through increased public awareness of our industry, and agriculture in general. The Association feels strongly that the future of rural Nevada depends on healthy viable land produced by Nevada ranchers.

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