

Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation

Congressman Rob Bishop, Chairman.

Mr Chairman:

My name is Teresa Kauffman and I run a small horse farm/riding stable near Reno, NV. Since 1975 I have managed riding stables with my sons in the Reno/Tahoe area, most notably Northstar Stables from 1975 to 2011. In 2010 Vailresorts purchased Northstar Resort, and at the end of the 2011 season I was handed a new contract. My insurance requirement went from \$1 million to \$5 million, my employee compensation was to more than double and we were required to have a \$2 million policy on all our private vehicles. This was impossible. We could in no way continue to run the business. Corporate headquarters would not even discuss a possible solution with us or our insurance company. Sadly, we gave up Northstar Stables, a good 80% of our family income.

So I have "dug my heels in" so to speak, and am trying to make a living from my little farm. We sold half our horses, and my sons have work elsewhere. Here at Rancho Red Rock I own 20 acres in a valley with a homeowners assn. The parcels are large and I can do a fair amount of rides on private land. Best of all, I have BLM land all around me. Tourists and locals alike enjoy being taken out in the hills where they can see antelope, deer and wild horses. And super views.

I had a permit 2001 to 2011. Last year I spent several months doing the necessary paperwork to renew my permit. My BLM contact Arthur Callan was very helpful, even loaning my son Leo and me a GPS to help us map routes. It has been a long process, and we miss being able to go out in the hills...last month the big brown envelope with my 10 year permit came.

BUT....insurance requirements have gone from \$300,000 to \$1 million. HERE WE GO AGAIN I thought!! I emailed Rick Lindsey, president of my insurance company, Worldwide Outfitters and Guides. He confirmed that was the trend, then he asked me if I could come tell my story in Washinton DC.

So here I am, this is my story. I do not see anything good coming from the higher insurance rates. Small local outfitters will not be able to finance the increases and go out of business. Big corporations will come in with less qualified, non local employees to fill the gap. Or certain activities will just be dropped. The public will lose. Similar to my time at Lake Tahoe...when we started in 1975 there were 13 riding stables in the area. Now there are 3. Yes some were on private land, but the issues are all related. Again, who benefits? The government will lose the fees these small outfitters pay. Just in my valley we have a prime example. There is a local hunt club that has been taking guests hunting on horseback on BLM land for 30 years. Last year when it was time for them to renew their permit. They were told they had to get an EIS statement. That was totally impossible financially. So what did they do? Founded a private hunt club, elected officers, members pay dues...all non profit. They still hunt...each week in the winter with 5 to 20 riders and 30 hounds. But it is all non regulated and they pay no fees.

In conclusion I feel I have provided the public with a valuable and enjoyable resource 38 years. I have lost my main location due to higher insurance requirements. I see the writing on the wall. It is happening again. Human beings need "high risk" activities to be truly human... to shake the cobwebs out...use our brains and nerves and feelings.....to help us deal with our computerized, technical world.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Teresa Kauffman