



Elko County Board of Commissioners

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July 15, 2021

RE: Agenda Item Consideration of the COVID Vaccine Passport

My Fellow Commissioners,

As I understand it, the commission will be considering a resolution against the requirement to provide a “Covid Passport” as evidence of vaccination. It is my assumption, that this request is based off a recent resolution that Lander County has adopted and would be presumable the same resolution that is being requested of this board to consider.

I certainly wish I could be in attendance to listen to the testimony and participate in the discussion. As I will not be in town, I feel it is important for me to express some of the thoughts I would have had during a live discussion.

First, I can certainly understand all the frustrations and lack of confidence in the government’s handling of the COVID-19 response. Much of the local work that was done early and continuously was in an effort to evaluate what was happening and to respond on our local level. From the beginning, it was clear that we needed to track our own data and I am glad we did. There is no question, this whole experience has been less than ideal. So much waste and devastation and harm, not from the illness but from the measures to mitigate it, which has been far and away worse. The economic and intellectual loss from my point of view will be generational. I have said many times, that this type of effort would go a long way to turn our horrific suicide rates around and give people the behavioral support that is lacking so significantly.

Elko County has been consistent since day one. Outside of quarantine and under the weight of the “Emergency Directives”, we managed to build the Public Health infrastructure that supported this entire region. All the while, our messaging encouraged mitigation measures, which included, personal accountability, while continuously negotiating with the state to lift the sanctions, open the economy and have a more adaptive approach in managing the outbreak, just like we do for any other issue.

I support drafting our own resolution, but not necessarily copying and pasting Lander County’s resolution. If this commission is going to consider a resolution, then we ought to draft one in our voice and express our vision. I am not questioning if Lander County’s version of the resolution is appropriate for Lander County, I am simply stating that I could not support their resolution as written. As such, Commissioner Steininger and I have co-authored a version that I would support.