

Governor addresses local

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Gov. Bob Miller said the new director of Nevada Department of Transportation will soon discuss the issue of sound attenuation walls along the new Interstate 515 with Mayor Bob Groesbeck soon.

During a wide-ranging interview with the *News* last week, Miller said Groesbeck sent a letter to the governor explaining the situation.

When the final leg of the freeway was built, so came the noise. But what didn't come with the project was sound walls because NDOT has stated it only builds sound walls if homes are present before building the freeway.

City officials have been working with residents to obtain state funds to build the sound walls because they say the noise violates federal noise standards.

According to federal regulations, the threshold for sound attenuation walls is 67 decibels or a difference of more than 15 decibels between prior building of the roadway and completion.

Miller said he hasn't spoken with the new director concerning

NDOT's procedure for not retrofitting the highway with sound walls after homes are built.

"I want him to get his feet on the ground and analyze it to see whether not that is feasible and to look into all transportation needs.

"Transportation is one of the biggest concerns in the state. We're building more on a percentage than probably any state in the country." He added that Nevada is one of the biggest recipients of federal highway funds.

In another transportation issue, Miller said there isn't any money for creating another bridge over the Colorado River. "That is not in the short-term. There is no [funding] available. ... That is not something that is on the immediate drawing board that I am aware of."

Congress authorized a second crossing of the Colorado River but didn't specify the funding.

Water

Miller said they are working on many fronts concerning water. "But the most prominent is a pooling concept which would allow the retention of large amounts of water for agreed distribution by the lower basin states [Southern California, Nevada and Arizona].

"The upper basin states have indicated a preliminary willingness for this to work because their primary concern is that we are fighting in the lower basin area over available water. If this works to resolve that, that is to their betterment."

According to the "law of the river," to exchange Colorado River water between the states requires permission from the federal government, the state from where the water is being used and the other states that comprise the Colorado River's lower basin.

While exploring different ways to obtain more water continues, Miller said if the pooling concept works, any additional water obtained would be placed in the pool.

Some critics are skeptical of the pooling concept because it is only a temporary measure which could jeopardize the valley's future growth on water that could be returned to another state.

Miller said the pooling concept would be with all the lower basin states and would require a majority of the states to agree to returning the water.

On another water front, Miller has had discussions with the

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Mexican government to acquire some of their water rights to the Colorado River. "That's been a little slowed right now because their economy is in such dire shape."

According to the "law of the river" Mexico receives 1.5 million acre-feet of water from the Colorado River and Nevada gets 300,000 acre-feet.