



Mineral County Sheriff's Office

Bill Ferguson
Sheriff

Rural Nevada Abandoned: Nevada State Police Fail Mineral County

When a man was shot on a Nevada State highway, the very agency responsible for patrolling our state's roads refused to respond. This isn't negligence – its abandonment.

As the Sheriff of Mineral County, I have a duty to protect my community, even now when I am compelled to expose a critical failure in Nevada's public safety system: the abandonment of rural communities by the Nevada State Police. I have repeatedly reached out to the Governor's Office for answers, only to be met with deafening silence. That silence ends now.

Recently, within 48 hours, Mineral County faced two shootings. The second – a violent incident on U.S. Highway 6 near the California border – demanded immediate attention. Naturally, I sought the assistance of the Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP), who is responsible for safety on state roads. Their response was shocking: "This is a county issue, not a highway patrol issue."

Let that sink in. A shooting on a state highway, and the agency charged with protecting those roads refused to respond. This is a blatant dereliction of duty and a dangerous disregard for the safety of those traveling through our state. Are our state highways no longer the responsibility of the state? If the NHP won't answer the call in a crisis, then what, exactly are they for?

But the failure didn't stop there. I requested support from the Nevada Division of Investigation (NDI) Major Crimes, an agency specifically designed to aid rural law enforcement with limited resources in complex investigations. Their response? They were short-staffed and asked my office to collect the evidence ourselves. If we had the resources to do that, we wouldn't be asking for their help in the first place.

Mineral County Sheriff's Office is already operating under severe strain. We are currently down seven deputies of our authorized strength of 20. We are doing more with less every day, yet, the Nevada State Police are forcing rural agencies like mine to shoulder their responsibilities as well. We don't have the manpower or budget to pick up the state's slack.

This crisis is not just about Mineral County – it's about every rural community in Nevada being abandoned and forgotten. The state's refusal to provide public safety resources to rural counties leaves our communities vulnerable and risks the lives of Nevadans.

I demand answers:

- Why does the Governor's Office fail to address this crisis?
- Why is the NHP refusing to respond to violent crimes on state highways and shirking its fundamental responsibility to ensure public safety on state highways?
- Why is NDI Major Crimes unable to fulfill their responsibility to rural counties?
- What financial assistance will the State of Nevada provide to rural counties to compensate for the services the Nevada State Police fail to provide?

The safety of Mineral County residents and the thousands who travel through our community is non-negotiable. We cannot and will not accept this level of neglect. The state must act now to restore public safety in rural Nevada.

Bill Ferguson, Sheriff Mineral County