Quesions include:

1. Why does Sen. Heller support the act?

As a lifelong Nevadan and an outdoorsman, I grew up enjoying Nevada’s many remote places.  I first enjoyed these great treasures with my father, and passed that same appreciation and respect along to my children. I am a strong supporter of access to public lands for a variety of activities and believe that there are instances where the designation of wilderness is appropriate.  The Pine Forest Range is a place where a broad consensus was reached through an open, transparent public process.  There was ample opportunity for the public to provide input through an open and transparent process, it was determined that wilderness best met the needs of the land, wildlife and community.

1. What does he think it will take to get the act to pass?

I am committed to working with the delegation to help this bill move through committee and eventually receive a vote on the Senate Floor.

3) If it does pass, what does he thinks it says about community-based activism in terms of management of federal land?

I firmly believe that proposed public land legislation should only be undertaken with community support, and done with great care and careful consideration.  We should not rush the development of any legislation or executive action that will have long-lasting impacts on the local communities and county residents.  We must ensure all stakeholders have a seat at the table in order to make certain that both short and long-term needs are met.  Moving too quickly or pushing proposals that do not have local support is misguided.

4) What does Heller think of this act being lauded by the U.S. Secretary of Interior?

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Currently, only an Act of Congress can designate a “wilderness” area, one of the most stringent designations an area of public land can receive.  I welcome Sec. Salazar’s support for the Pine Forest bill and look to it as a model of the right way to approach changes in public land designations. These proposals should originate from local communities and stakeholders, not be driven by top-down Washington politics.

1) What is Sen. Heller's take on the president's proposals for cuts and future strategy? I know many in the GOP have been critical of  the plan, so if Sen. Heller  agrees with those critiques, in general what would he support in terms of cuts to the military budget?

2) POTENTIAL EFFECT ON NEVADA: President Obama's plan seems to center on cutbacks among Army and Marines. I realize the plan as outlined didn't have many specifics and the proposed budget is yet to be seen.  However, if the rule of thumb will be cutting back on Army and Marines, Nevada -- with Nellis and Fallon and all the high-tech drone stuff -- would seem to be in a position to fare well under such a general change. But I know we also have many defense contractors in the state and I'm wondering if Sen. Heller is concerned about cutbacks there, particularly when it comes to job losses in the Silver State.

Answer

The President directed his remarks to say that we need to rid ourselves of outdated large scale military operations but did not specify.  The President said we need to invest in intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and counterterrorism.  If the focus is truly on the later, I know of no better place to handle the needs of our future military force than at Nellis and Creech Air Force Bases and the Fallon Naval Air Station.

The operations conducted at these facilities provide state of the art training, help our military fight cyber security threats, fight the war in Afghanistan, and monitor military operations throughout the world. Moreover, these bases employ cutting edge technology and will house F-35’s in the future.

I am a strong supporter of our troops and believe that the United States must continue to have a strong national defense. I will closely evaluate the specific details of the President’s plan to ensure our nation continues to have the greatest military force in the world.