Administrative History

The political history of the State of Nevada is closely associated with the mining industry, but State control of the latter took a long time to evolve. The office of Mineral Land Commissioner created by a Legislative Act in 1907 did not provide supervision over the industry. The Attorney General was ex officio commissioner, and his main duty as commissioner was to examine all applications for patents of the public lands of the State or of the United States, except mining claims. It devolved upon the Commissioner to contest any application on land considered more valuable for mineral than for any other purpose. In 1909 the position of Inspector of Mines was created to supervise the mining industry in the State, a function that continued through 1975. In 1929 a Legislative Act established a Bureau of Mines for the State of Nevada, under the direction of the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada, "who shall appoint a competent mining engineer as bureau director." The objectives of the office were: (1) to conduct a mineral survey of the State, and catalog each mineral deposit and occurrence through metallic and non-metallic analysis, thereby serving as an information bureau and exchange on Nevada mining; (2) to collect, compile and publish statistics regarding mining.

The 1943 Legislature established the Advisory Mining Board, with members appointed by the governor. The purpose of this Board was to: 1) study ways and means of furthering the mining industry of the state; 2) further explore and develop the oil and gas industry; 3) report results of such studies to the governor; and 4) call upon the State Bureau of Mines and analytical laboratory in furthering the objectives and purpose of this Act. At the same time, an "Oil Well Bounty" served to encourage the boring of wells in search of oil.

The Oil and Gas Commission, under the Division of Oil and Gas Conservation, was created in 1975. In 1977, however, the Legislature abolished both the Division and the Commission, as well as the Advisory Mining Board, and created the Division of Mineral Resources, with an Oil, Gas and Mining Board in an advisory capacity. It was the responsibility of this office to study the means of furthering the mining industry, develop the gas and oil industry, evaluate federal policies in this area, and administer the Oil and Gas Conservation law. The goal was to administer and plan for the use of mineral resources "in the best interest of the State and its citizens." There was a further change in 1978 with the creation of the Department of Conservation and Mineral Resources, under which was the Division of Mineral Resources, with the Oil, Gas and Mining Board under the Division.

In 1984 the Department of Minerals was created, and in 1991 supervised the Commission on

Mineral Resources, the Division of Administration, and the Division of Regulation. The final change came about in 1992, when the Department of Business and Industry was created, and the Division of Minerals came under its supervision.

Records 1952-1995 , 42 cubic feet

General Office Files 1982-187 7 cu. ft.
Miscellaneous collection of office files arranged alphabetically by topic, from Administrative through Workers' Compensation.

Nevada Advisory Mining Board 1974-1977 1 cu. ft.
This Board was created in 1943 to further the mining industry and was answerable to the Governor. Records in this series consist of files of the Chairman, Douglas Miller, the bulk of which are related to the controversy over Bureau of Land Management regulations on mining. Included also are budget papers for 1977, possibly the last before it was abolished in this year.

Minutes 1957, 1974-1988 4 cu. ft..
Included in this series are minutes, notices, announcements and resolutions from the Boards and Commissions under the Department of Conservation and Minerals. The files are scattered throughout several boxes of correspondence and other materials.

Correspondence 1952-1985 6 cu. ft.
Correspondence and reference files covering the many topics related to the mining industry: Interstate Oil Compact Commission, mineral resources, regulations, oil and gas conservation law, geothermal regulations, agreements, etc.

Hearings (1954) 1984-1988 10 cu. ft..
This series records the implementation of the agency's goal to administer and plan for the use of mineral resources in the best interest of the State and its citizens through a hearing process which each party was required to go through before accessing the State's mineral resources. Each case was assigned a docket number. The collection includes audio cassette tapes of the hearings.

Permits 1974-1995 15 cu. ft..
This series consists of Oil and Gas Conservation Commission records of permits granted (#160-300), expired permits, files about oil companies no longer drilling in Nevada, and geothermal expired or never drilled permits. The former are arranged consecutively by permit number, the latter ones are in alphabetical order.