



## **Nye County Secures Permanent Funding for Public Safety**

Nye County is celebrating a major victory for its residents and first responders: permanent additional funding for public safety through the Public Safety and Sales Tax (PSST) has been secured. Recent legislative action removed the expiration date from the Nye County Sales and Use Tax Act of 2007, which was set to expire on September 30, 2027, guaranteeing long-term, stable support for emergency services and critical infrastructure.

This move reaffirms the County's steadfast commitment to public safety and the well-being of its communities.

Assembly Bill 69, passed with near-unanimous support in both the State Assembly and Senate, was officially signed into law by Governor Joe Lombardo on June 2, 2025.

The original Act has been a cornerstone of Nye County's public safety efforts. Thanks to proactive legislative measures, the imposition of the sales and use tax will now continue indefinitely, guaranteeing uninterrupted support for the firefighters, deputy sheriffs, and public safety teams who serve and protect.

Under existing law, the Nye County Board of Commissioners is empowered to allocate the funds generated by this tax for a wide range of public safety initiatives. These include hiring and equipping additional personnel, upgrading existing facilities, and constructing new ones. Communities across the county will all continue to benefit.

This comprehensive approach ensures every corner of Nye County remains equipped and prepared to meet public safety needs.

Nye County Comptroller Helen Bae, while acknowledging budgetary challenges, emphasized the critical role of this ongoing revenue stream. "Public safety makes up 32 percent of our General Fund, but our revenues – from sales tax to property tax – are not keeping pace," Bae said. "With declining mining revenue and rising costs, the public safety sales tax is essential to maintaining core services and financial stability."

Sheriff Joe McGill emphasized the significant impact of the public safety sales tax, stating, "This revenue is absolutely crucial to everything we do. Without it, our department would have 15 fewer personnel." PSST funds for 2024 were \$2.5 million representing 17% of the 32% dedicated to emergency management and law enforcement.

His remarks highlight the tax's direct and immediate role in maintaining staffing levels and strengthening the department's operational capacity in all the County's communities.

The positive impact of the PSST was particularly evident in 2024, showcasing its crucial role in funding essential services. In that year, the PSST generated its highest funding to date, totaling \$4,489,068 which represents approximately 5% of the Nye County General Budget. This substantial funding allowed for robust investments, with over \$1.7 million dedicated to salaries and wages, underscoring a strong commitment to public safety personnel. Additionally, over \$1.3 million was channeled into vital capital outlays, ensuring continued modernization of equipment and infrastructure, including essential items like body-worn and vehicle cameras. This consistent and growing revenue stream is clearly empowering Nye County to deliver outstanding public safety services and enhance the well-being of its communities.

Scott Lewis, Fire Chief for the Town of Pahrump and Director of Emergency Management for Nye County, expressed his "absolute support" for the continuation of this Act.

Lewis declared it a "PUBLIC SAFETY GAME CHANGER for rural Nye County", and hailed it as the "single most important and significant effect for advancing operational effectiveness, preparedness, and response".

Lewis shared numerous tangible achievements made possible by the Sales and Use Tax, showcasing its transformative power:

- Pahrump proudly added 12 cross-trained Career Firefighters/EMS personnel.
- Valued mutual aid has been consistently provided to neighboring communities and agencies, including rural Clark County, the Nevada National Security Site, the BLM, and the US Forest Service.
- Significant advancements in communication capabilities include the purchase of multi-frequency mobile and portable radios, the establishment of a SNACC 800 MHZ communication tower providing full geographical coverage of the Pahrump Valley, and the integration of mobile data terminals in every emergency response vehicle.
- Essential operational equipment, such as hose, nozzles, hand tools, and ladders, have been readily acquired to ensure crews are always prepared.
- Capital improvements and Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) initiatives were supported, including apparatus and generators for stations during power outages.
- High-quality Personal Protective Equipment, including turn-out gear, Self-contained breathing apparatus, and Thermal Imaging Cameras, have been procured to keep first responders safe.
- Homeland security initiatives regarding critical infrastructure protection have been successfully met.

- New suppression technology, such as Lithium-Ion battery fire suppression material, proved incredibly effective in quickly extinguishing a Lithium-Ion battery fire on Highway 95, opening the road in hours, not days, and minimizing damage.

Lewis stated that for the most remote and frontier areas of Nye County, this Sales and Use Tax is the "only source of revenue to support their respective volunteer emergency responses". He also highlighted the transparency of the tax, noting that plans and expenditures are openly presented and approved annually by the Nye County Board of Commissioners in open meetings. Lewis proudly stated he cannot recall a single instance where the public spoke against fire plan expenditures.

The permanent removal of the expiration date is a testament to Nye County's foresight and commitment to its citizens. It ensures the county can avoid potential staff reductions, maintain support for essential equipment and personal protective gear, and continue funding for vital communications, capital improvements, facilities, and apparatus. This positive outcome means Nye County will continue to build upon its public safety successes, rather than regress to former operational levels.

"The Nye County's Sales and Use Tax Act of 2007 is an absolute essential element for Nye County's public safety," Lewis said.

This landmark legislative action guarantees the long-term stability and effectiveness of public safety operations, fostering a safer, more secure, and prosperous environment for all residents and communities within Nye County.

**About the Nye County Sales and Use Tax Act of 2007:** The Nye County Sales and Use Tax Act of 2007 authorizes the Board of County Commissioners of Nye County to impose a sales and use tax dedicated to funding public safety initiatives, including personnel, equipment, and facilities, across the county.