

SECTION 7

**PINEDALE ANTICLINE
OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

PUBLIC HEARING

PINEDALE, WYOMING

PINEDALE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

7:00 p.m., Wednesday

January 12, 2000

Hearing Officer:
MR. DON SIMPSON
Bureau of Land Management
Deputy State Director,
Division of Resources
Policy & Management

A P P E A R A N C E S

Bureau of Land Management Pinedale Field Office Manager:.....	MS. PRILL MECHAM
Bureau of Land Management Project Manager:	MR. BILL MCMAHAN
PIC Technologies, Inc., Consultant:	MR. AARON CLARK
U.S. Forest Service:	MR. TERRY SVALBERG
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:	MR. TOM JOHNSON
State of Wyoming, Office of Federal Land Policy:.....	MS. CAROL KRUSE

Public Hearing Attendees

- 1 Mike Todd – Western Gas
- 2 Jeffrey J. Reising – Pinedale Town Council
- 3 Bill Taliaferro
- 4 Leonard Hay
- 5 Mike McMurry
- 6 Michael Klaren
- 7 Linda Baker
- 8 Dan Heilig – Wyoming Outdoor Council
- 9 George D. Funk
- 10 Tom Darin – Wyoming Outdoor Council
- 11 Brian Ault – Ultra Resources
- 12 Joe Sorensen
- 13 Randy Evans
- 14 Gordon Mickelson
- 15 Meredith Taylor – Greater Yellowstone Coalition
- 16 David Kanski
- 17 Jim Noble
- 18 Lynn Bernard
- 19 Don Hartley
- 20 LaVeta B. Pennock
- 21 Al Acker
- 22 Kirk Steinle – BP Amoco
- 23 Susan Kramer
- 24 Leslie Rozier
- 25 Paul C. Hagenstein
- 26 Marvin Sorensen
- 27 Dave Hill – Alpine Oil & Gas
- 28 Cat Urbigkit – Pinedale Round Up
- 29 Sue Sommer
- 30 Doug McWhirter
- 31 Judi Adler
- 32 Joanne Garnett
- 33 Eric Root – Anschutz
- 34 Lloyd Dorsey – Wyoming Wildlife Federation
- 35 Kurt Cordingly – McMurry Oil Co.
- 36 Phil Howland
- 37 Mike Denison – Schmid Oil Field Service
- 38 Bobby Bundy
- 39 Jill Hermstad
- 40 Bill ??
- 41 George Ogden
- 42 Dallas S. Valdez
- 43 Mike Schmid
- 44 David Bunning – John Bunning Transfer
- 45 Terry Svalberg - U.S. Forest Service
- 46 Randy Shipman – PFUSA Flaming Gorge Chapter
- 47 Jay Nesse
- 48 Cathy Flansburg – Wexpro-Questar
- 49 Michael Kramer
- 50 Robin Smith – McMurry Oil Co.
- 51 Andrew Tomich – Questar Infocomm
- 52 Thomas B. Rossetter
- 53 Steve Jones
- 54 Dennis Brabec – Wyoming People for USA
- 55 R.V. Thompson
- 56 Vernon Setser
- 57 Dan S. Budd
- 58 Pati Smith – Representing Senator Craig Thomas
- 59 Julie Barnes
- 60 Zack Noble
- 61 Gordon Reno
- 62 Dallas Bennett - Texaco
- 63 Betty Wilkinson – SW Wyoming Mineral Association
- 64 R. E. Hogan
- 65 Brian Klaren
- 66 Tom Fiorie
- 67 Rob Rozier
- 68 Warren E. Sorensen
- 69 Jim Schaefer
- 70 Jeff Gearm
- 71 Albert Sommer
- 72 Jerry Morrell
- 73 Scott Baker
- 74 Robert Barrett
- 75 Robert Griffin
- 76 Gene George – Yates Petroleum
- 77 Kurt Meeks – Joe's Concrete & Lumber, Inc.
- 78 Jim Peary – HS Resources, Inc.
- 79 Tim Kaumo
- 80 John Fandek
- 81 Al Kinnison
- 82 Laurie Goodman – Ultra Resources
- 83 Rod Edwards
- 84 Dawn Ogden
- 85 Tadd Perry
- 86 Karen Bundy

PROCEEDINGS

(Public Hearing commenced 7:00 p.m., January 12, 2000.)

86 people signed in; 17 people made a statement]

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. First, I would like to thank everybody for coming - I appreciate it. I know that you have many other things going on in your lives and that you would probably rather be somewhere else. But, I know that you are here because you are interested in the oil and gas activities proposed on lands administered by the BLM; you are here this evening to convey to the BLM and cooperating agencies, your thoughts and concerns regarding the Pinedale Anticline Oil and Gas Exploration and Development DEIS.

My name is Don Simpson. I am the Deputy State Director, Division of Resources Policy and Management for the BLM in Wyoming. I am the Hearing Officer this evening. It is my job to make sure that the hearing is run smoothly and that all who wish to make a comment are given the opportunity. I guess my preference is just give everybody an ample opportunity to comment on the draft DEIS, that hopefully you all had an opportunity to take a look at it. I'm going to give everyone about five minutes and we'll give you the minute mark. If you will help us out there, that will be appreciated.

I got a list of names in the order that everybody signed up. And right there you have a microphone so everybody can hear you, at the bottom. We have a panel of six folks. We have a court reporter - Stacy is her name. She came over from Cheyenne to take notes. I hope you got enough paper, Stacy. Speak very carefully, she would like you to say your name, spell your last name, and then which group you represent. If you are speaking on behalf of yourself just say on behalf of yourself. If you are speaking on behalf of a group, state who you are representing, that will be most helpful to the panel here.

Prill Mecham is Field Manager for the BLM. Bill McMahan, sits next to her, he's the DEIS project manager. Aaron Clark is with PIC Technologies. Terry Svalberg, on my left, is with the Forest Service. We have Carol Kruse with the State of Wyoming, Office of Federal Land Policy. Tom Johnson, with the Army Corps of Engineers. So hopefully these folks can listen to the comments, if they have any questions they may ask you to clarify something, but our real goal tonight is mainly to hear your comments. And if you have any questions all the folks up here will stay after the session to answer any questions.

We are going to ask you to stick to five minutes. If you have any written documents feel free to give Bill anything you might have tonight. If after this evening you would like to add to what you said, send those to Bill. Inside the handout that you got out front, you will see Bill McMahan's name written on the first page and his address. He'll need those comments by February 4 and that doesn't mean post marked, right, by February 4? February 4 in Bill's hand will be the best for his purpose.

Okay. Here is David.

MR. BUNNING: My name is David Bunning. I represent myself as a Wyoming native, as a Rock Springs native. I represent a company that hauls coal and oil field equipment and I would just like to give a little input on what, I think, is common sense. So I think my figures relate to oil and gas activity. I was given some actual figures by one of the local gas companies. And just put a little common sense into it. I called around and got the current county tax rates for regular oil sales tax. It is amazing how these figures will add up.

To start with, the company that I represent is an oil field based trucking company. We move drilling rigs. We haul and handle casing. We do pipelines. We have been in business for 105 years, based in Rock Springs. I don't think there are too many companies that can say that, in general, in the State of Wyoming. We have a good livelihood from the gas industry, as well as other trucking industries. As a generality, right now to drill the average well up here is about 1.5 million dollars. To break that down a little bit, that rig will create roughly 125 jobs directly related to that drilling rig. Of the price of drilling that well, the 1.5 million dollars, roughly 75 percent of that figure is totally taxable for common oil sales tax. If you stretch that out by 900 wells with the proposal, that equates to 1 billion 12 million 500 thousand dollars to drill wells of taxable figures. Four percent sales tax would yield Sublette County alone 40 million 500 thousand dollars per well excursion for the entire project.

Realistically we know that will happen, but I don't see how that project will be stopped for the sake of affordability, jobs, and sales tax. I did a rough break down to case a well. Right now, to put it on line for production casing alone equates to about \$18,000 per well. At four percent sales tax per well, multiply that times 900 wells, just the casing, the lining, the production tubing, would yield roughly 6 million 7 hundred thousand dollars in sales tax alone. Any casing that's produced from top to bottom, that's from the steel mill transportation ending up in the bottom of the hole, equates to 40 plus jobs per well. That's from the steel mill, be it in Alabama, Arkansas, Canada, wherever, to the bottom of the hole, which usually equates to local would be on site immediately, and the delivery.

Like I say, we are in the business of moving drilling rigs. Right now the average drilling rig out here on the Mesa is about \$18,000 per well, per rig move. Through the moving of that drilling rig, we will bring one to five people out of Rock Springs, we would put them up in Pinedale for at least one night or maybe two, we will buy them at least six meals here in Pinedale. Our wages alone from one rig yields a substantial income to Sublette County, just from our people being here to haul drilling rigs. That's with the casing people, that's with the casing haulers or any services relating to that given well.

There again I don't feel that we should stop or slow down this project. I think it needs to go through. It's a pretty good tax base. And in conclusion, by speaking here, I would like to multiply - realistically all the figures that collate this evening could be multiplied by 1.5 for my job, for your job. We produce one and a half other jobs relating to us. I can say I'm part of the oil and gas industry. Therefore, one and a half other people are working in conjunction with myself.

Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: Thanks, David.

Don Hartley will be next. On deck will be Bill Taliaferro.

MR. TALIAFERRO: Bill Taliaferro, Rock Springs, Wyoming. I support the project going forward and I'm from Sweetwater County. The taxes are too important for the state, for the area, for the region and again I support this project going forward.

Thanks Bill. It sounds like I got your name wrong. Next we have Leonard Hay.

MR. HAY: I would like to listen to a few more and talk later.

MR. SIMPSON: We will let you speak at the end. Well, we will hear from Betty Wilkinson next.

MS. WILKINSON: My name is Betty Wilkinson, W-I-L-K-I-N-S-O-N and I'm with the Southwest Wyoming Mineral Association. We would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft DEIS. As a representative of numerous oil and gas related companies in southwest Wyoming we have a very strong interest in the outcome of the management in the public lands in Wyoming. My comments will not recommend any changes in the resources or methodology that are suggested in the third paragraph on the Executive Summary of the draft DEIS. I'm not an environmental specialist, and I'm not a lawyer, but one of the many people of mineral development to sustain my life and the lives of thousands directly or indirectly dependant on projects. We realize that the purpose of this study, namely, resource impact and mitigation, those impacted resources are more than just natural resources, they include people, jobs, and mimic sustainability. 51,000 people have lost their jobs in the oil and gas industry in the last ten years. When does the human species become threatened and endangered as one of the working people of Wyoming? It's as important as a plant and or animal species.

Every mitigated fact has answers in the environment. Years of study and thousands of delays -- there are continual delays and appeals to every project that is proposed. The BLM must listen to people in groups, as well as single interests; such as wildlife preservation, minimizing visual impacts, concerns about potential quality of life impacts in this community, continued employment opportunities, and providing a clean burning fuel for the citizens of this country. However, all of these single interests combine into the multiple that should have equal standing. This land was meant for multiple use. We do not accept the claim that degradation is the result of the oil and gas industry and activity. We know that extraction activities may alter part of our environment, but not degrade or ruin them.

This area is not national park, it is not a wilderness area, nor is it a wilderness study area. The Pinedale cattle raising industry is vital for many wildlife species, beautiful to enjoy, provide hunting and fishing and potential natural gas. Gas is the fuel of choice and it belongs to all Americans. Environmental protection not preservation is what should be important, protection for all interested when balanced, can be managed to a win-win conclusion. I urge you to move forward with this project, with the current administration you can fast track the proposal in a year's time. The need for a few, surely should not take two or three years.

Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Betty. Michael Klaren up next. Michael Kramer you are on deck.

MR. KLAREN: My name is Michael Klaren, K-L-A-R-E-N. I'm reading this statement for Sylvia Sandoval, who is part owner of the Mocroft Ranch south of Pinedale. "I hope that the BLM follows and carries out the most strict mitigation alternatives suggested in the EIS. In many cases, I think mitigation should go even further than the EIS recommends. There is not time, right now, for me to cover all areas of concern, but I will address a few of the issues.

The view shared around Pinedale should be preserved even if that means limiting the number of wells allowed on the anticline. In residential areas, wells should not be allowed even 800 feet within dwellings. That distance is still too close. Air pollution should be controlled even if that means wells operate without diesel engines. An alternative to diesel is described in Residential Mitigation Opportunity No. 9 in the EIS, on Page 4-43.

Noise from gas drilling rigs should be mitigated at night. In fact I would go so far as to say that drilling should be stopped entirely during the night. Actually, the best scenario in regard to residential issues is the Resource Protection Alternative on all Lands and Minerals described on Page 4-41. No wells drilled at all within the sensitive resource management zone.

With time I will continue pleading to the BLM, for their utmost protection of wildlife, the rivers, the wetlands, ground water, ranching recreation and cultural and historical areas. Of particular interest to me was the acknowledgment, in the EIS, of the unique beauty and resources of the Pinedale area and I agree with the EIS statement that many of the most sensitive resources are found on private land. I know I can't appeal directly to the BLM but I am asking, now, that community members and officials of Pinedale help private landowners protect the wonderful resources of water, beauty and wildlife that are on private land, but are part of the whole community. I also ask that human health and well being be protected whether gas wells are on public or private land. It is hard to admit, but as a private landowner, I feel like the personification of a third world country who has been made the unwitting accomplice in the destruction of my own home. I was naive when I signed a standard oil/gas lease, that does not mean that my mistake should cause cumulative damage to the rest of the community.

One more specific request I have to make to the BLM is that they arrange a meeting between operator/lessees, private landowners, Native American interests, the public and the BLM in order to pursue Cultural/Historical Mitigation Opportunity, No. 2, stated on page 4-67 in the EIS."

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. Sorry for pronouncing your name wrong. Mike you are next and Linda Baker on deck.

MR. KRAMER: Michael Kramer, K-R-A-M-E-R and I'm representing myself. Actually I currently live right now in Red Stone, but within the next two to three months we will be at the community of the New Fork Social Club, which sits right inside the Pinedale Anticline. This is on one of the sensitive resource management zones. It's also considered a Class II visual area by the BLM. It is 50 feet from the BLM boundary. Part of my land sits on the 100-year flood plain. I'm 1,200 feet from wetlands and unfortunately, I don't own my mineral rights. So my perspective is I would also vote that we try to go with the resource management plan that applies to all lands, so that we don't have wells within 350 feet of people's houses.

The BLM, in their resource management plan, is supposed to protect natural resources and also the health and safety of people. With 700 wells being proposed, and it could be more if you look at the figure in the DEIS statement, that translates to 3 million 259 thousand 968 pounds of hazardous air pollution being released each year. There will be 1,520 pounds of organic carbon released in the atmosphere, 89 thousand

pounds of carbon dioxide and even 667,900 pounds of benzene each year. The ground water in the area will be down approximately one and a half acre-feet per year. That's 65 to 1 million gallons per year that may affect my water at my house. I hope not.

The wetlands in the DEIS are only given a 500 foot buffer by the BLM and the state gives absolutely no buffer and that's not your concern here. Pits that are not netted are a definite threat to the survival of birds along the river. It's interesting that the United States Air Force was given a six mile buffer, but the BLM has a quarter mile buffer to residents, and the state only gives 350 feet. According to the DEIS statement, reserve pit contents are just going to be buried out there in the desert. All of them soaked with benzene and all those hazardous chemicals, I would venture to say, are going out to drain into a pit. Those pit liners need to be taken up and treated as hazardous chemicals. And if there is soil contamination from those chemicals, those all need to be excavated as if it was a Superfund site. I don't think those should be left to carry those rains and benzene.

And I applaud you for at least changing the boundary to a quarter mile instead of 350 feet. The 350 feet from someone's house, that the state allows and even from the quarter mile DEIS statement, maximum exposure scenario, there is still an increase risk of cancer. I would propose that boundary be made a half mile or any wells that are within a half mile of a residence should have recovery units to recover those carbons and benzene. As you probably know, benzene is an extremely toxic agent and it attacks the bone marrow like very few chemicals do. There are reports to show 0.28 parts per million is toxic. So I would like to see the town get involved and the county commissioners, in limiting development to keep the wells at least a half mile, or at least a quarter mile as the BLM recommends, away from public residences. To that threat there are already one or two wells, which are within, I think, a square mile from people living near Highway 191. I think the EPA needs to be brought in and ample air samples need to be taken to make sure we don't have a significant risk to those people already living there. Another option if we do have wells closer than a quarter of a mile, we will have to do continuous sampling of blood and metabolites to make sure they are not being exposed to significant benzene.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak here. I do think we need to develop natural gas. We also need to keep people's health and safety in mind here. I don't think we need to risk Pinedale, so that people can have clean burning fuel in L.A. and Phoenix and yet we are being exposed to these toxic chemicals.

MR. SIMPSON: Linda Baker is up, then behind her Robin Smith.

MS. BAKER: My name is Linda Baker, B-A-K-E-R. I represent myself. This DEIS has made it very clear that the Pinedale Anticline Project will go forward. And just as surely, our legacy of healthy populations of native wildlife will falter. The vast herds of pronghorn and mule deer and thousands of sage grouse will not be seen again in our lifetimes.

Perhaps, with the proper stewardship that we all hope someone in the future will assume, that we ourselves lack the courage to enforce, our herds and flocks will rebound. And perhaps the world will become even more crowded, the Green River Valley will continue down its present road, and become something entirely different. There is every reason why we should proceed on this huge landscape alteration with the utmost caution. The valuable gas underlying this valley has been there a long time and will remain. Its value is in its longevity as well as its abundance. There are too many valuable resources at stake, each one of which is as important as any other to our country's citizens, and each one of which the BLM has a mandate to preserve.

Neither do we know just exactly what effect the unbridled rush to develop will have on ultimate numbers of pronghorn, mule deer and sage grouse, ravens, meadowlarks and jackrabbits, pintails, horned toad and great gray owls. This project will be studied closely, however, as a pilot project. But corrections it takes may be too little too late. By the time we realize the extent of destruction, we will have lost our chance to regain biological ground for a very long time.

It is a mistake to consider this document as an update to the Pinedale Resource Management Plan, covering not just this project, but the entire 931,000 acres, in decisions that will be with us for a long time. A mistake for this office of the Bureau Land Management to depart from the mission of the BLM: "to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations." Because when the BLM says, quote, "additional exploratory and development drilling could cause significant adverse impacts to the human and natural environments" and "landscape changes are going to be dramatic," and "even a moderate level of development is expected to result in significant impacts

to wildlife," that would be considered an unhealthy loss of productivity. I consider that a sickness. This must not be a prescription for the entire Pinedale area.

The RMP update must be considered as another document. The basic reason for contemplating totals of either 500 or 700 wells is because "the BLM must require that all operations be conducted in a manner which protects other natural resources and the environment quality and results in the maximum ultimate recovery of oil and gas. BLM interprets these seemingly inconsistent directions to mean that the agency must provide effective mitigation to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation, but cannot unreasonably infringe on the lessee's existing rights. Further, BLM considers the economic removal of all the leased resources in the leasehold a right conveyed to the lessee." But conflicting with the interpretation is the BLM statement that no level of mitigation can be applied in some areas to minimize the severity of impacts to less than significant. So, if the program that allows "maximum recovery of oil and gas" fails to protect natural environmental quality, then BLM has not provided effective mitigation.

"No level" of mitigation is not an alternative here. The alternatives that are currently being analyzed are insufficient to adequately protect the considerable resources at stake. Some operators believe 300-350 wells would be a realistic goal. I request that BLM assess the impacts of 300 to 350 wells as an additional alternative, as FLPMA gives authority to do. BLM must also consider two wells per section as another possibility or it fails to protect the rights and property of the people.

BLM states "that limiting the number of well pads to less than four per section may result in a taking of the lease rights granted to the operators." If more than four wells per section are drilled, would it be that the acknowledged impacts result in the taking of the wildlife from the people of Wyoming? Will they be compensated for the taking? Will they be compensated for the lost opportunities to hunt deer, antelope and other game animals? Will they be compensated for the lost opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the Wyoming Game and Fish "Watchable Wildlife" program, on which Wyoming taxes were spent?

The Pinedale RMP states that "wildlife habitat management will be oriented toward the maintenance of fish and wildlife. Habitats activity planning will emphasize habitat enhancement and protection." Operators were well aware of these covenants promised to public land and wildlife owners in a publicly reviewed and approved legal document when they took these leases. Where does it say in any Federal document that the needs of the operators are more important than the needs of the other resources? Where does it say that a balance of resource requirements cannot be attempted? Why will it not be possible to achieve both of these goals?

Quote, BLM can only impose reasonable mitigation measures upon a lessee, unquote. How does one define reasonable? What percentage of the BLM's and the operators total budget should be devoted to conservation measures to protect what they are legally bound to protect? I would like to see a new section added to the DEIS that takes into account whether the recent 3-D seismic exploration was helpful, and whether it would further protect and add understanding of the resource to conduct further 3-D testing. Careful study is essential. I feel like I am just scratching the surface and this DEIS is a complex document. I will be providing written documentation.

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Smith is up next.

MR. SMITH: I will submit my comments in writing.

MR. SIMPSON: Dan Heilig is up and Thomas Rossetter is on deck.

MR. HEILIG: My name is Dan Heilig. I'm the executive director of the Wyoming Outdoor Council. WOC was established in the 1960s by a rancher /conservationist named Tom Bell and for the past 32 years we have been encouraging the wise use of natural resources in our state and protection of the values that make Wyoming so wonderful and attractive for many of us.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and thank the BLM for providing this opportunity for the public to express their opinions and comments on the draft EIS. We intend to submit written comments during the comment period, but we would also like to request that the comment period on the draft EIS be extended by three weeks. Earlier, we requested a 30-day extension; we were granted 10 days. A large number of other, fairly substantial environmental documents, including the DEIS for the 3,000 well Continental Divide Project and the 5,000 well Wyodak coal bed methane project, were released for public

comment during the same period, making it difficult for citizens to review these documents. I also think it is inappropriate for the BLM to be soliciting public comment during the Christmas season. Releasing environmental documents during the holiday season impedes and interferes with the public's ability to perform careful review. From December 15th forward, it seems, folks are not concerned about these documents; their attention is focused on other matters such as family and friends. And this seems to be a recurring problem. Unfortunately, over a period of nine years, I have detected a district trend of BLM releasing documents for public comment during the holiday season. I would ask in the future that BLM modify the timing of the release of environmental documents in order to provide greater opportunity for the public to comment.

We want to commend BLM and the environmental contractors for disclosing truthfully, objectively and honestly the potential environmental impacts of this project. In my opinion, it's a first to see a document objectively set out the full range of environmental consequences likely from a project of this magnitude.

The Wyoming Outdoor Council is very concerned about the environmental consequence from this proposal, as noted in the document, to air and water quality in the area of development and to wilderness areas downwind from the project area. By the way, for those of you who don't know, the Bridger Wilderness is part of a larger area that comprises the largest Class I airshed in the continental United States, an area that receives special protection under the Clean Air Act. The document does suggest that there will be impacts to visibility and other air quality related values. The document also reveals impacts to the wildlife, recreational activities, open space, cultural and historic resource and on and on.

In light of these impacts we would like to offer the following suggestions. First, the BLM should halt all further leasing of oil and gas in this area. I'm holding a copy of the BLM oil and gas lease notice for the February 1st oil and gas lease sale. There are a number of parcels in Sublette County offered in this document. It is our belief that the level of development described in the resource management plan has already been exceeded by development in the area. It's unconscionable for the BLM to exacerbate this situation by continuing to allow leasing before the BLM can catch up with their environmental analysis; the RMP does not address this level of development, and certainly not in this area. Additionally, we would like to see development activity limited during crucial periods, during harsh winters and spring time, and during all phases of development, not just during exploration and development. The limitation on activity needs to be extended to include the production phase. It does no good in our judgment to place restrictions on activity during the exploration and development phases, and then waive them for the remainder of the project's production phase, which may last 20 years, perhaps longer.

We would like to see the BLM develop a transportation plan in coordination with the operators for the project area.

We ask the companies, and this is a direct request from the Wyoming Outdoor Council, to apply the mitigation that the BLM requires on the public land to private land in the project area which, because of the presence of riparian and wetland areas, is often more environmentally sensitive and contains more valuable resources than upland areas.

We also ask, and we feel strongly about this, that BLM appoint a public citizens' group to oversee the mitigation and monitoring plan that is adopted in the Record of Decision. Implementation of mitigation measures described in the EIS/ROD is critically important and should therefore receive sufficient attention. A citizen oversight group can help accomplish what's set out in the document.

We would like to see the air quality monitoring program expanded to include other sensitive vistas and lakes in the Wind River Range.

We think that BLM needs to continue, in fact expand, the wildlife monitoring program to extend through the life of the project. The Mesa is one of the most sensitive wildlife areas in the state. We need to have a good solid base of information, and we need to continue to receive information throughout the life of

the project to determine whether there are changes in wildlife population numbers, and if there are, whether they are in any way connected to project activity.

And, finally, we feel the BLM, working with local conservation districts, should establish a water quality monitoring program for the New Fork River and other surface waters potentially affected by the project. The surface waters in this area are among the most important and sensitive and should receive the highest level of care and protection.

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On behalf of the Wyoming Outdoor Council, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

MR. SIMPSON: Thanks, Dan. Thomas Rossetter next and Steve Jones on deck.

MR. ROSSETTER: My name is Thomas Rossetter, R-O-S-S-E-T-T-E-R. I own 350 acres along the New Fork River, just upstream from the airport and adjacent to the Mocroft Ranch, and there was some statements made by Mr. Klaren and what's going on there and being adjacent to it I have some experience. Now being next to an industrial gas development at this very stage, I am concerned, of course, about how it's going to continue. Therefore, I have some understanding of what may be happening up in the BLM and I have written a letter to the BLM, but I have recommended certain things.

It is very clear that the project area is a more environmentally sensitive area than exists in the Jonah field and consequently does require a greater protection. With that respect I would like to point out that I think the resource protection alternative is certainly the way to go in the sensitive areas of the project area. I also suggest that the mitigation opportunities that are presented there, be implemented and those that would protect in some way, to some degree the residential areas that are adjacent to it. It certainly will be a help with the wildlife and the raptors, water quality, the Mesa, etc. I certainly would hope that there would be no wells put in on the face of Mesa and certainly not up on the rim. I also would agree that a half mile certainly ought to be a minimum from any residence.

My concern is private lands and I'm well aware private land only represents about 30,000 acres of the total 200,000 acres in the project area. And the fact that the BLM does have some area of influence, I hope over the operators, they can be encouraged to observe the same sort of a regulation on the private land as may be implemented on the BLM land.

I attended a meeting not too long ago with the county commissioners and I was told at that time, that perhaps it really wasn't necessary for Sublette County to become involved, and the way to do these things was merely for one neighbor to go to the other neighbor with some things going on that was negative and can't we work something out. I was a little skeptical. This is the perfect opportunity to find out if we go to the operators and say to them, let's be careful, as well as to the BLM let's go gently. And I would like to quote one portion of the DEIS and I'll read it very slowly. It says, "While expressing concern, very few residents have opposed continued gas exploration and development within the project area. Rather they plead for orderly and controlled development that preserves the values and natural characteristics most important to the area's quality of life." They don't think the gas companies will go away commercially, but let's do it in a way that balances the environment along with the community. Thank you, very much.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. Steve Jones next and Rod Rozier after Steve.

MR. JONES: Thank you. My name is Steve Jones, J-O-N-E-S and I'm just here representing myself. Like any of the other speakers I am concerned about the impact on the environment that this project will have and how it may affect the quality of life for those of us living in Sublette County. I should mention I do live here in Pinedale. I think it is important to remember that the gas that underlies the Mesa will be there in the future and as I understand, the way that technology develops, there is always the ability to get natural gas off these tight sands over a longer period of time. I think that could ultimately benefit the state's economy base. There would be more gas derived out of these sands in the future as technology improves.

I was at a meeting last night involving a transportation group that's related to the DEIS. In fact, a lot of you were there, I believe. And one of the things I noted was that there was discussion about whether or not a road ought to be improved at the Jonah Field, and this Pinedale Anticline area, but that discussion was put off because of the considerable uncertainty that was noted regarding how much production would be taking place in the northern portion of it. So it seemed to me that's an important fact to consider here and that you all ought to really slow down.

In terms of the development, I noted that in terms of the alternatives that are raised, that you have a 500-well alternative and a 700-well alternative, but your own DEIS states that a lot of professionals have looked at it and think that 350 wells would be all that it would take to develop this field.

You ought to have an approximate 100-well alternative. One hundred well alternative because again the gas is going to be there and if you don't have a good idea now exactly whether or not it's economically feasible why not wait for some of that development to occur later.

I would suggest furthermore you concentrate on the development that is going to occur right now, going to schedule right now, to limit to the best prospect. I believe that's along the crest of the anticline as your DEIS spells out.

I would also like to urge that you consider just two wells per section, at least initially, and perhaps another seismic study should be done before you make any determination here, perhaps a 3-D seismic to give you a better idea of what's down there.

As the DEIS states, you are looking at an industrial view. If we have a lot of wells out there and I look to the Mesa to be maintained if at all possible, I have very grave concerns about the impact on air quality for the area. As it was pointed out, if this is a Class I airshed there will be an impact. My view is it will be substantially more than what's mentioned in the DEIS. I would also like to see mitigation fully enforced. That would include everything that is set forth in the resource management plans. Flood plains, I would say any development there should be avoided.

Furthermore, you have the Lander Trail and the concern about the historic viewshed from the Lander Trail. I don't think any drilling should be taking place there. With regard to some of the environmental concerns regarding pits that will be associated with these wells, I would suggest that all pits do pose substantial problems for migratory birds and so forth, that reinjection be used as a preferred method of taking care of all the waste fluids that are produced, rather than any discharge. Also, oil from the waste pits that are out there do substantially effect migratory birds, I believe. I would also like to suggest that no leasing takes place. I think we have had enough leasing and what is leased already ought to be developed in a much slower fashion, other than what you are proposing here.

I guess that's all the comments I have. I hope you are able to enforce all these mitigation measures as much as possible.

MS. KRUSE: Mr. Jones, did I understand the alternative, 100 wells?

MR. JONES: That's correct.

MR. SIMPSON: Rob Rozier is next, followed by Dennis Brabac.

MR. ROZIER: Rob Rozier, R-O-Z-I-E-R, representing myself as a landowner and a resident of Pinedale, who lives within the project area down on the New Fork River, adjacent to the Mocrefts. Where others have indicated there has been drilling. I like the public process, a process such as this, as I have been involved and it's certainly enlightening and there is opportunity for public comment and I do believe that has an effect. I also want to personally thank the author of the draft DEIS. Not everybody is going to be happy about all of the results and that's a certain mess of discussion. I have skimmed through it and have tried to read it and tried to understand what the impacts are going to be. While at the same time looking out my bathroom window watching the progress that has been going on with the wells that are being drilled.

I certainly think the Pinedale Anticline project is going to go ahead and I also think this is going to have benefits. I look at the natural gas or hydrocarbon as one of the gifts that were given to Sublette County. I look at that as one of the resources, but not the only one. Maybe I'm a little bit naive, but I hope that we can develop that resource while at the same time minimizing the impacts on those other valuable resources. I have some specific recommendations based on my experiences, but that's kind of the overview of development with necessary mitigation opportunities.

I certainly am recommending the resource protection alternative with the mitigation opportunities that are going to be presented. I would like to see monitoring of residential wells, somehow the issue of residential water wells being monitored. I understand that there is going to be some monitoring of livestock up in the project area, up in the Mesa. While I don't think people are less important than livestock, what I

would like to see addressed is if there are going to be any effects that can be documented on the water well issue for residences within the project area.

I am participating in the transportation committee process. I go when there aren't other meetings that are going on at the same time. I missed the meeting last night, but I would like to emphasize that roads in that area, whether they are new roads or existing roads, be combined with as many other disturbances as there can be. If we can keep pipelines, roads, utilities in the same pathways it certainly makes sense to me. If we look back on this project 20 years from now or 30 years from now, we should see that the roads we put in make sense, and are continuing to be used. If we look at putting in an industrial park road as an alternative does that really make sense if we are not going to be developing this end of the project area.

I also had a comment on the draft DEIS concerning some of the noise background that was being used there and my experience in living, residing next to a few wells that were put across the river from us. I had never heard any farm equipment that was along that nature -- it seemed excessive and much above the background noise. Just a personal comment. Along with that, and that's something that I would think would be a mitigation opportunity, I don't see that as being an unreasonable kind of a question.

Along with that, during the completion phase of wells there is a tremendous amount of light that is needed at the well site for safety. I would certainly think that could be mitigated also, so they do not shine in on residences. It seems minor, it seems like it ought to be easily addressed. I think the comment that was given, why don't you pull your curtains, the house is a 100 years old and it's never had curtains on it and why should we have to put them on for this intrusion.

The last thing I would like to suggest has been mentioned before, that is I would like to see a memorandum of understanding between the BLM and the operators, including a paragraph or a statement where the operators are asked or do agree to apply the mitigation standards or the drilling standards to private land. I think that would go a long way toward helping the entire region, rather than just public land and private lands.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity of being involved. Again, I commend you on the work that you have done so far. Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: Thanks, Rob. Dennis Brabac.

MR. BRABAC: I'll pass. Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: And I have R.V. Thompson next followed by Gordon Mickelson - I'm trying to translate the writing of someone else and apologize. Okay. Mr. Thompson?

MR. THOMPSON: No, I decline.

MR. SIMPSON: Next is Gordon Mickelson.

MR. MICKELSON: I'm going to reserve mine until later if I could please.

MR. SIMPSON: Meredith Taylor followed by Jim Noble.

MS. TAYLOR: My name is Meredith Taylor, T-A-Y-L-O-R. I'm a representative of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. We have been working around Yellowstone for the last 17 years and I represent 8,500 plus members. The main thing I would like to speak about today is I wanted to thank you for hosting this hearing. I realize that it is required by law. I appreciate the opportunity to be here and I'm glad we were able to make it over the icy roads that we all traveled today.

I have been a spokesperson for Greater Yellowstone Coalition for quite a few years. I really believe that so many people have spoken articulately and respectfully tonight as to why we want to see all of these resources protected and at the same time appreciated by the people of Wyoming.

I appeal to the BLM and the industry in particular and would like you to consider moderation in this proposed Pinedale Anticline exploration and development and production. Balance is the key word here. I think that we can have our cake and eat it too, but in limited doses. You know, it's interesting in land use planning - so many different places that we have, look around the west. We see urban, suburban sprawl

and even rural sprawl. Now if we allow blanket approval of BLM's 17 million acres, in the State of Wyoming alone we are going to have oil and gas sprawl.

In other words, if we could allow some leasing in key areas and produce that resource in a clustered arrangement, instead of in that sprawl, I think we would have a much better opportunity to protect the resources that so many of us care about and at the same time benefit the communities and the state.

If the BLM is to proceed in this sensitive area it must proceed with caution, a balance of resource extraction and resource protection is what we are seeking here - to keep Sublette County from becoming just another energy colony for industry. While minerals can offer economic benefit to the people, those benefits have historically been short-lived compared to the long-term lifestyle that we have all enjoyed, scenic vistas, abundant wildlife and clean air and water. We are not a cash cow for industrial development in Wyoming. That's the balance and the balance must not be business as usual.

We don't want to continue to see rampant sprawl of drilling rigs, pump jacks, roads, pipelines and the entire infrastructure that goes with industrial development. The balance I see here is a possibility for staged development that would be thoughtful and respect that antelope and mule deer have their opportunities for wintering on the Pinedale Anticline.

We recommend that the BLM select the resource protection alternative with the following caveats to assure mitigation of the impact of fossil fuel development and ensure that development is limited, not only by size and scale, but by timing and to the extent that the disturbance allows, it is allowed only at one time in an area. That's specific to seasonal developments and season closure, even during the production stage. My advice is we discontinue rampant leasing and leave Green River Basin until the impacts of such widespread industrialization can be evaluated. We need to limit the well density to no more than one site per quarter mile. That means that there could be more than one well, but it means they should all be on one site; require that pad drilling be used and that production facilities be centralized to minimize the human effect. I think we need development of roads and travel in the project area for wildlife.

During the spring I think it's important to require protection of breeding and nesting for sage grouse and other birds of prey and that we should require operators to help fund the wildlife studies. So many studies are being done now that it's incumbent on the industry to pay their fair share of this.

Among those monitoring studies, I agreed with some of the speakers here tonight. I think it is important that we expand the lake study in the Wind River to make sure that Class I Airsheds and watersheds are not impacted by the pollutants that have already been deposited in the Winds and eventually are going to be in the future.

In addition, waste pits as we see them today are contributing to the demise of more than 2 million migratory songbirds a year. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service this is a tremendous loss of an international resource, that we should stop as soon as possible, immediately if not sooner, by either not using the waste pits, finding a new mode of disposing of waste or of covering these waste pits to where wildlife, particularly birds, are not using it in the high desert. I think we need to establish development corridors which would reduce the impacts of roads, pipelines and power lines and require that all power lines are buried.

We request industry operators implement these same resource protections on leased private land. We charge them with the challenge of representing all landowners as equals and while we realize that different stipulations come in on different leases, we are one community that wants to see all of these resources protected on the same land. So we would like to see the same resource alternatives used on private lands in the future. We would like to see the desert lands that undergo reclamation reclaimed with native seeds or plants and have reclamation occur quickly, as soon as possible, so that there is not desertification on the site.

In conclusion, I would like to understand how the maximization of lease development can occur at the same time that there are significant impacts? As admitted by the DEIS, we find these two mutually exclusive and I guess the charge is to all of us. How can we make this work in a proper balance so that there is not a demise to the future of wildlife in Wyoming. We are going to see a lessening in our wildlife resource that we have seen in other areas and that we don't want to see here.

I think the charge to us is creativity and how we can come up with different alternatives and mitigations in better ways, either through a centralized facility or of automation of monitoring of the well sites so that there is not all the travel to these remote sites on a daily basis. I think it's up to all of us to try to accomplish these goals and I look forward to working with any of you to do that. Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you. Jim Noble and Tim Kaumo next. These names are probably wrong.

MR. NOBLE: I'm Jim Noble a rancher from up Cora way. Our family has been here for roughly 125 years. I don't think there is probably anybody in this crowd that loves this country more than I do myself. We have worked awfully hard to preserve a lot of it and at the same time we have to have some development. We need to create jobs. I spent a little bit in the service. I watched little kids picking food and eating it and 2, 3, 4, picking grapes, picking food and eating it. And it was a God-awful site you have ever seen. We are headed this same direction here in this country. And if we don't create some jobs, we don't watch out for our agriculture and all the rest of our industry, we are going to be in the same boat on food and on oil. So we need to be looking at our resources, how to develop them and how to do it right.

I think a lot of this has been addressed. We have also got to look at economics. I don't think we can just say I want 100 wells or I want 200 wells. And many of us, at least that list of oil companies, it's been kind of a salvation and I think at first some of us jumped on it. They didn't write any stipulation on how to drill or where to drill, the distance wells should be within the radius of their homes. A group of us did get together up in Evergreen here and we did put a lot of these stipulations in. I think we are also protected by our wetlands people, Tom Johnson here with the Corps of Engineers over seeing this, including oil and gas well spacing.

I would like to speak a little bit on the deer and sage chickens and the other birds. I would like to see all of the pits covered with netting to keep the birds, the water fowl, and the sage chickens out of there. We have had over hunting of deer and sage chickens. We didn't use to have a red fox population in this country years ago; there was a lot them but they weren't hunted - they were poisoned, they were then gone. We now have literally hundreds red fox. I had hunters on the ranch three days. They caught 27 red fox in about a two mile radius and never missed one of them. There is still red fox running around and this has caused the reduction in our sage chickens. That and over hunting and mismanagement. Again, I agree we have got to maintain habitat for them. Through wise use we can do that. The deer, you can look around the town of Pinedale and see the deer can adapt. We got them all laying down on the lawns around town. They will lay down right in the street. Elk is a different animal, antelope is different, but the deer can adapt, but they are a grass eating animal. So they need to depend very much on it in the wintertime. But again I think wise use, wise management, we can handle that problem.

One of my greatest concerns is our water and air quality. The two most important resources we have here in Wyoming, in fact the world. We have vast amounts of open water, lakes here in the mountains. I am concerned about the acid rains and I don't know what we are doing as far as monitoring. I would like to know that. This same area has vast amount of ground water. If you go back a few years ago when El Paso was wanting to use a nuclear bomb to produce natural gas. One of our main concerns was the mixing of radiation and it getting into our ground waters. There's probably more ground water down here on the Mesa and the Little Colorado River or the Little Colorado Desert than anywhere in the country. It's untapped and I would like to see it protected. I don't know just how you do that, but I think there is ways through casing and monitoring. The day will come when we are going to be tapping that water - it's going to be one of our most valuable resources.

As far as county commissioners and zoning commissioners monitoring or having a say in what happens on our agricultural lands, I think we have enough bureaucracy and I think we got enough people dictating what we can do and what we can't do. I think it's time that we learned how to communicate this with the oil companies. You need to write up a lease that protects you. I think the agencies already have enough stipulations. We are protected as far as wetlands or wells or waters and so on. I think that's it and thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Noble. Tim Kaumo will follow. Sorry if I got your last name wrong.

MR. KAUMO: Hi, my name is Tim Kaumo and I represent the Southwest Wyoming Mineral Association. First of all, I would like to thank you guys for letting us comment on this issue and all the hard work you have put into this, the BLM and the rest of you.

My feelings are more on the socioeconomic aspect than anything in the draft EIS. There was a letter from Jerry Wilson, who is superintendent of the Sublette County School District No. 1. If you look at this facility you'll see it is a pretty nice facility. Yet, he stated that they have 150 to 200 students. Now this is an ongoing thing if you talk to anybody in education. One of the biggest concerns right now is being unable to upgrade equipment in the schools or the fact that people are moving out of the area because of work.

I think it's important in a community like this, as we just heard, that it's a fact that what drives these communities is what paves the roads, pays the bills and what have you. Declining revenue throughout the state is a big issue, especially this year. Every year the decline is getting worse. We have a chance right now with natural gas in our own backyard, to take this project, work with it, and do a good job as we have in the past. I don't know if any of you visited the Jonah field. That field is one of the best fields put together that I have seen and I have seen plenty. It's clean. The transportation plan was designed to where the access roads were minimal. In the past we have seen the access roads in a winding fashion, here or there. We could never make sense of them, and we made issue with the BLM on transportation in the past. We were never allowed existing two-track roads, which makes sense. They are there. They are existing. Most of them are the shortest distance between two points, a straight line. It's a win-win situation for the people in the project and for anyone in the area associated with it.

It makes sense to use what's there to create less impact to the area; shorter distance, less money, less construction. That Jonah field is a good-looking field and a very good example of what Wyoming can bring to everyone. Wyoming has got a good asset here in their own backyard to fuel the future, the fuel of choice. That area up there you couldn't ask for a better place to drill. It is extremely, I would say, pristine. In fact, it holds a very large quantity of natural gas and is in our own state. We have got to take this into consideration and use this project as an example for the rest that we do. I would like to stress another thing in the anticline area that we would recommend that the number of rigs allowed be more than the suggested limit of five, within two miles of the New Fork River. Where our drilling season, being as short as it already is because of wildlife issues and what have you. You would limit drilling to one location per rig per year then again you would have the service companies, which basically takes the impact from this. They would be shut out from the work that could be there and once again go looking elsewhere for work, which mean less kids for the school; it's just a snowball effect. I would like to see people in the education business because that's where it seems to come home. You look at facilities like the Pinedale School, when the schools in session you see what we're talking about, it's basically not filled. They have a nice facility here, it can handle at least 200 more kids and they are running, with a third of what they should have. It seems funny to me that it takes an act of God to get our concerns and impacts addressed in order to make a living on a piece of land, but a president can set aside two million acres with a stroke of a pen, this doesn't seem like common sense to me.

I ask that the town of Pinedale and the commission support this project in whole in order to stabilize the economy and offer a greater future for all. We would also like to ask the BLM to help and work with the citizen group to assure and provide their families a better way of life. Once again I stress that the transportation plan that was put together for the Jonah Field should be associated with this field also.

In closing I would like to say that the Minerals Association of Southwest Wyoming is in full support of this project. And I'd like to thank you all for all your hard work and your time. Thank you.

MR. SIMPSON: Thank you, Tim. Then I need to change to Karen Bundy and then Leonard Hay and Gordon Mickelson and then we will open it up after those two.

MS. BUNDY: I will wait for written comment.

MR. SIMPSON: So the balls in your court, Leonard.

MR. HAY: Okay. So - I'll try and talk loud.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay.

MR. HAY: In the Pinedale paper about ten days or two weeks ago, I read about a meeting you had up here and I was flabbergasted that there were statements made here that the county commissioners and the planning and zoning commission should adopt federal regulations on private land and I'm a private land owner. Washington D.C. controls most of these western states. They are not controlled by the Cheyenne office of the BLM, they are controlled by Washington D.C. and we have the Wyoming Oil and Gas

Conservation Commission that controls state land and the private land in the State of Wyoming. I think 90 percent of the private landowners will agree with me and oppose us letting the feds control our private land.

Now the BLM, I feel sorry for you fellows. It's a tough job. Here we are, we are dealing with a commodity that is not renewable. Carter told us we had only 12 years of methane gas, when they pushed it all to coal and stuff. Well, we got a lot more than 12 years. I'm not saying how much, but it's a definitely a lot more, probably a 100 years. But Table Rock, I have said this before, they have plugged and are plugging 1,780 wells. Most of this drilling came on after price controls -- 15 cents a 1,000 that was relieved in '78 and then we got a tight gas price, \$1.24 a 1,000 for two or three years then it got down to 90 cents. Now, it's back up to 2.20, 2.80, partly because of supply and demand.

If we have a tough winter today, a tough winter in the east, the power plants are putting out more energy today than they put out for some time. Why? Because of computers. Many of them run 24 hours a day. They are using gas turbine engines with gas generating a lot of electricity now and you are dealing with non-renewable resources. Now one reason these fellows were talking 500 to 600 wells is because it took so long to get permits. Same thing down at Wamsutter on the fields, it took so long that they just put in for dozens of permits. Now I think the companies have made a mistake there because I don't think they are going to drill that many wells, but it's on the docket and that's it.

But the fellow that said they told him to pull his blinds because of the lights on the rigs, it's up to you companies to control your rigs and see that it doesn't happen. Anyway you fellows have a tough job here, but a couple years ago at a meeting up here, 84 percent of the taxes of Sublette County came from oil and gas. I don't know if that's today, but in Sweetwater County 80 percent come from minerals. Now, I own a ranch at Table Rock and I had a deep Halliburton well drilled that just finished within a quarter of mile or so of the house. Another thing, I'll take you down and show you 175 wells and that country's better today than when it was drilled, but the wells have been depleted. It's a situation you, by God you got to think of the future too here. You fellows go a tough job.

MR. SIMPSON: Last time he promised not to talk about wild horses too.

MR. HAY: That's another page.

MR. SIMPSON: Thanks, Leonard. Let's see Gordon Mickelson.

MR. MICKELSON: I think Mr. Hay and Mr. Noble stated what I had to say.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. Good, thank you. Like I stated earlier if there is anybody else that decided they would like to speak, you have five minutes. If anybody wants some time to think about it, we will go on through and take whatever time you need.

MR. BENNETT: My name is Dallas Bennett. I'm here representing Texaco. Leonard talked to his issue, and some of the other issues the private land owners have brought up today. Texaco is not a lease holder in the Pinedale Anticline, but still an interested party. We operate in our DEIS areas, and I would like to speak to private landowners and apologize for past mistakes made, but assure everyone that, at least Texaco, when dealing with private landowners, we will go out of our way to assure your needs are met.

Now, the gentleman mentioned he couldn't close his blinds. He was right, he was having an intrusion that hadn't been there before and he didn't need to be treated that way. I don't think most operators today would do that. The ones I know that are in this area would not do that. Most other problems could be addressed in a neighborly way. Another gentleman mentioned these things can be talked out. If there is a problem, rather than running to court, bring it to a meeting and talk about it. Most of the time it can be mitigated at small expense.

Some of the other issues I heard tonight really aren't realistic in our point of view. I would like to talk about the pits. The Fish and Wildlife Service did a study and I think Wyoming got real good grades in that this last year. Open pits were not that much of a problem and getting better all the time. Operators net their pits to keep migratory birds out. Maybe there was a problem, but it's getting better. The pit liners, I believe it's state law, which covers even Federal pits, are to be tested before they are put to bed. If you got your pit liner as most of the gas wells, we have to test for hydrocarbon or any other metal in that pit. They have to be taken out before it can be buried. And so far as the benzene in these pits, I don't think it's a problem. I think that's being taken care of by law already.

As far as the water wells, I hear discussion on that. Whenever Texaco drills a well near a private well and septic, it is monitored so we can compare later. It's kept us out of a lot of courts. I believe that's probably good enough I just want to thank you for getting me up there.

MR. SIMPSON: Okay. Thanks, Leonard. Thanks, Dallas.

Is there anybody else that would like some time? Okay. I guess I personally would like to thank everybody that took the time to come.

(Public hearing concluded 9:14 p.m., January 12, 2000.)

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

David Bunning

Thank you for your comment.

Betty Wilkinson – Southwest Wyoming Mineral Association

The Southwest Wyoming Mineral Association also filed written comments (see Letter 17). Thank you for your comment.

Michael Klaren – Representing Sylvia Sandoval

Sylvia Sandoval also filed written comments on behalf of the Mcroft Family Partnership (see Letter 101). Thank you for your comment.

Comment 1: Visual quality impact would be reduced under the RP Alternatives which would limit the number of well pads in the Sensitive Viewshed SRMZ to no more than 4 or implement centralized production facilities. These and other measures, designed to protect the sensitive viewshed, are listed on Table 2-8 and in Section 4.8.4 of the DEIS.

Comment 2: As is discussed in the DEIS, BLM would restrict well pads from being placed within 0.25 miles of occupied dwellings on Federal lands. On private and state lands, state regulations could allow wells to be placed within 350 feet of occupied dwellings.

Comment 3: The DEIS concludes, based on extensive modeling of very “conservative” emissions from the project, no significant impacts (including cumulative) are anticipated to air quality related values.

Comment 4: See response to Comment 5, Letter 1 – EPA which demonstrates why shutting down drilling rigs at night is not a reasonable mitigation opportunity.

Comment 5: A decision regarding the appropriateness of this mitigation measure will be made in the ROD. If the mitigation measure is adopted, such a meeting could be managed through the AEM planning process.

Michael Kramer

Mr. Kramer also filed written comments (see Letter 49). All of the points raised by Mr. Kramer during the hearing were addressed in BLM’s response to Letter 49.

Linda Baker

Ms. Baker also filed written comments (see Letter 100). All of the points raised by Ms. Baker during the hearing were addressed in BLM’s response to Letter 100.

Dan Heilig – Wyoming Outdoor Council

Comment 1: The modeling performed to address impacts to air quality related values does not conclude that there will be “significant” impacts. See response to Comment 3, Letter 26 – Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Comment 2: See response to Comment 4, Letter 23 – Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance.

Comment 3: Presently, BLM policy allows for low environmental impact production-related activity. The high environmental impact from construction, drilling and completion activity is seasonally restricted. It would not be reasonable nor practical to restrict the low impact production-related activity unless centralized production is utilized.

Comment 4: See response to Letter 23, Comment 13 – Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance.

Comment 5: BLM anticipates and will encourage a high level of public involvement in the AEM planning process. A decision as to whether a citizen group is necessary to oversee AEM monitoring and mitigation will be determined during development of the planning program.

Comment 6: BLM anticipates that each of the monitoring requirements outlined in this comment will be addressed in the AEM planning process.

Thomas Rossetter

Mr. Rossetter also filed written comments (see Letter 33). All of the points raised by Mr. Rossetter during the hearing were addressed in BLM's response to Letter 33.

Steve Jones

Comment 1: See response to Comment 2, Letter 23 – Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance.

Comment 2: As was concluded in the DEIS (see Section 2.3.3), limiting development to just 2 well pads per section is neither technically or economically feasible. Seismic surveys have been conducted over the last year within the PAPA. This information will aid operators in characterizing natural gas deposits.

Comment 3: See response to Comment 3, Letter 26 – Wyoming Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Comment 4: As is stated in page 2-15 of the DEIS, BLM does restrict development in flood plains.

Comment 5: BLM currently prohibits drilling within 0.25 miles or the visual horizon (whichever is closer) of the Lander Trail on public lands (see page 2-15 of the DEIS). The RP Alternatives would expand protection of the trail's viewshed (see Table 2-8).

Comment 6: The operators do not discharge waste materials referenced in this comment.

Comment 7: See Wildlife Mitigation Opportunity 18, page 4-187 of the DEIS and Letter 4, Comments 17 and 18 – USFWS.

Comment 8: See response to Comment 4, Letter 23 – Greater Yellowstone Coalition and Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance.

Rob Rozier

Mr. Rozier also filed written comments (see Letter 92). All of the points raised by Mr. Rozier during the hearing were addressed in BLM's response to Letter 92.

Meredith Taylor – Greater Yellowstone Coalition

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition filed written comments (see Letter 23). All of the points raised by Ms. Taylor during the hearing were addressed in BLM's response to Letter 23.

Jim Noble

Comment 1: Significant impacts to air quality related values in the Class 1 Airsheds are not anticipated. See section 4.10.4 of the DEIS for additional measures which could be used to reduce impacts to air quality.

Comment 2: Ground water protection measures are described in Section 4.13.2.3 of the DEIS.

Tim Kaumo – Southwest Wyoming Mineral Association

Thank you for your comment.

Leonard Hay

Thank you for your comment.

Dallas Bennett – Texaco

Thank you for your comment.