

June 2nd, 2016

B.L.M. Scoping Statement

To Whom It May Concern with the B.L.M.:

My name is Mike Briggs and I own Converse County Auto Repair located in Douglas, WY in Converse County. We are located just 60 to 70 miles due south of the Powder River Coal Basin in Wyoming.

Due to the ongoing energy issues I now live in a town that is afraid. Afraid of more layoffs, afraid of the further drop in local based economy, a fear of more locally owned businesses closing, afraid for our friends and / or neighbors losing jobs, afraid as local business owners that we may also have to lay off employees, afraid of our property values decreasing and much more. In essence towns should not have to live in fear. Nobody openly talks about it, but the fear and concern hangs like a heavy cloud. But, this is not just occurring in my town but many towns across our nation whose economy is based on retrieving our natural resources.

In my small business owners eyes, I see what has become the "perfect storm" causing loss of jobs in the coal, oil, natural gas, uranium and railroad industries. Taxes, relying on foreign oil, public land access, fear of climate change, environmental groups claiming habitat damage, possible change to unproven and unreliable "green energy" and much more has caused this perfect storm. We have been able to weather out numerous boom and bust cycles with gas and oil, but coal has always been the mainstay of our local economy.

Just within the last 6 months our town, with a population of approximately 5000, has seen the loss of 2 fast food restaurants, a car dealership, fuel / convenience store and a number of other oil, gas and coal related companies close their doors. My personal business has seen a large decrease in sales as compared to the same time period the previous year and I have had to lay off one support employee and not rehire another employee for another support position opening. Our normal staffing is 7.5 persons and currently we have 5.5 employed due to loss of local revenue.

We have seen the loss of approximately 500 coal related jobs and countless oil field, railroad, uranium and local business related jobs all within a 100 mile radius of our town. This can be devastating to a state whose total population is only about 300,000. With the state of Wyoming being this country's leading supplier of coal and a major supplier of oil, natural gas and uranium our government should be troubled by the direction it is taking. The loss of revenue for towns, counties, states and the people could be devastating. Not to mention the huge loss of taxes to the local and federal governments paid by the companies and their employees. A loss of local taxes greatly affects our education systems, funding for needed projects and community upgrades such as libraries, justice buildings, road and highway repairs just to name a few.

The current uses of our natural resources is some of the cleanest in the world. The reclamation of the lands in which these resources are taken from is impeccable. Since our current government likes

to play "World Police" maybe they should start holding other countries accountable for their pollution levels which is actually causing an impact. A very possible starting point would be to cut off all the foreign money that we give to these countries. Wouldn't that be a novel idea. No money until they clean themselves up.

As for all this climate change talk. The Earth has been going thru natural climate changes since the beginning of time. There have been notable changes in recorded annual temperatures. The only proper way to judge what is actually occurring with our climate and the use of all natural resources is the need to take a "snap shot" of what has occurred since the beginning of the industrial revolution until now. From read reports that change would be a positive 0.60 degrees temperature increase for the entire earths average. Hmm...Doesn't seem that much for a 100 year time period. As for Mr. Al Gore and his cronies, to all so called environmentalist groups, to all of the paid traveling speakers of these groups and anyone else that fits this bill....I toss out my B.S. card. The companies that supply our natural resource energies are being responsible and diligent in their efforts to keep it clean, keep it affordable and to reclaim afterwards. How do they think they can build clean energy products without the use of the current energy resources? Does one of them have a magic wand that no one knows about? Coal, gas and oil will burn clean with minimal impact. But what are we going to do with burnt out batteries from hybrid automobiles, broken and worn out windmill parts or damaged solar panels? At least with the natural resource industry if not all of its components can recycled or reclaimed. With oil or coal, enough heat can be produced to melt steel for recycling. Not sure if a windmill or several windmills can create that much energy and heat? Seems to me that Mr. Gore, his buddies and the so called environmental groups are just trying to push a lot of unjustified propaganda on an unformed public for their own political aspirations.

Lastly I consider myself a sportsman and I am proud of that. I have personally hunted on lands next to mine sites, area of mine sites that been reclaimed, in and around oil fields and even next to oil pump jacks. These lands have been either owned by the B.L.M. or personal property. Never have I personally witnessed any major impact on wildlife or habitat. Actually it can be some of the best to hunt on. I have harvested antelope in the middle of oil fields, and mule deer and elk on or next to reclaimed land from mining. Not none of these animals had 3 eyes, forked tongues, 2 tails, were transgendered or had any other abnormalities. These animals were healthy, plentiful and had very good to excellent habitat to thrive in. No wonder Eastern Wyoming is an out of state hunters dream.

In closing, please take into careful consideration the people, the local and state economies when making further decisions.

Mike Briggs

Owner: Converse County Auto Repair

Douglas, Wyoming

cc: Wyoming Governor Matt Mead / Senator Mike Enzi / Senator John Barrasso