

From: [Betsy Leonard](#)
To: mail_ulpeis
Subject: Clean Up and Clean Energy!
Date: Thursday, May 23, 2013 9:08:31 PM

Dear

Dear Mr. Plieness:

I am writing to voice my concerns regarding the Department of Energy's (DOE) Uranium Leasing Program and its recent Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

The ULP covers roughly 25,000 acres of public lands across western Colorado, and future uranium development should only be done in a manner that protects public health, safety and welfare. The current PEIS is inadequate and it needs to expand its alternatives, bolster impact analyses, support renewable energy, and protect long-term public interests. For DOE to usher a process that results in the best choice, any analysis should also address bonding, royalty rates, uniform and holistic standards for mine reclamation, and uranium market conditions.

Under DOE's preferred alternative, scores of existing leases could operate alongside 19 new mines during peak operations. Instead, DOE should substantively consider a Clean Alternative, one that prioritizes mine reclamation and safer energy alternatives. Western Colorado has thousands of un-reclaimed uranium mines, so create jobs by cleaning-up old sites before making new legacies of pollution. Also, DOE should elevate solar energy above dangerous uranium within the scope of its ULP. Solar is a viable energy alternative that does not risk public health or environmental quality, and western Colorado is renowned for its potential.

In order for future DOE uranium development to be done safely, impact analyses must include thorough programmatic review alongside in-depth, localized information. The Uranium Leasing Program runs across Mesa, Montrose and San Miguel Counties; it will inherently have regional implications on economy, environment and public health. The PEIS lacks a detailed analysis of water quality, wildlife and water supplies. The cumulative impact analysis is also weak, excluding a comprehensive study of long-term economic development, transportation corridors, and public health; in general failing to consider the combined impacts of all past and present uranium activities in this region.

Western Colorado has already carried the disproportionate burdens of an industry that left behind a legacy of waste and radioactive contamination. The PEIS states only "minor" environmental justice concerns are associated with increased uranium mining in this area. Yet our communities would again become dependent on a boom & bust market; we would also face unavoidable environmental and land use degradation for private companies to profit. To help curtail these issues, DOE should create bonding and royalty requirements for ULP Lessees.

I believe DOE can offer a program that supports promising sustainable jobs without increased uranium mining. The DOE should contribute to our local economies by putting people back to work reclaiming old mines and developing renewable energy. Every Coloradan has the right to a clean environment, a strong economy and a healthy community.

Sincerely,

Betsy Leonard