

**From:** [Benita Phillips](#)  
**To:** [mail\\_ulpeis](#)  
**Subject:** Clean Up and Clean Energy!  
**Date:** Sunday, June 30, 2013 11:46:38 AM

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Dear

Dear Mr. Plieness:

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

As the DOE is keenly aware, due to the Rocky Flats "clean-up", radioactive materials are a bane to the future. There is no scenario that logically supports the continued use of radioactive material as we have in the past. Despite years of studies showing the morbid and lethal effects after both short and long term exposure depending on the source and its strength, reinitializing an industry such as this is pure folly. As an RN of more than 35 years, working with Uranium workers, growing up downwind from Hanford and watching victim after victim slowly decay and waste away, I ask you to remember, these elements were buried deep into the Earth for a reason. As defined by the "Precautionary Principle" this industry is a pariah and far too dangerous at every level of development to continue ANY serious consideration.

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 interest. 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 and at the same time is renowned for its solar energy potential. DOE should put people back to work cleaning-up old mines and developing sustainable, renewable energy economies.

In order for future DOE uranium development to be done safely, impact analyses must include a thorough programmatic review alongside in-depth, localized information. Western Colorado has already carried the disproportionate burdens of an industry that left behind a legacy of waste and radioactive contamination. The PEIS lacks a detailed cumulative impacts study, excluding investigation 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.

The ULP runs across Mesa, Montrose and San Miguel Counties; it will inherently have regional implications on our economy, environment and public health. 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 and face unavoidable environmental and land use degradation for private companies to profit.

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,  
Benita Phillips RN, BSN

President of Western Colorado Congress of Mesa County

Benita Phillips