

From: [Kim Wheels](#)
To: [mail_ulpeis](#)
Subject: DOE URANIUM LEASING PROGRAM
Date: Monday, July 01, 2013 1:20:57 PM

To: Ray Plieness, PEIS Manager

I'm a resident of Ophir, CO, and recreate in western Montrose County frequently. I have a background in mechanical engineering, which includes work for the nuclear power industry. While I support use of existing, already-mined (and already used) uranium as a transition fuel to a 100% renewable energy world, I am not in support of reopening the mines and mills in western Colorado. My reasons are listed below, but if I was to pick 2 to highlight, they would be:

1 - Western CO does not have sufficient water resources (currently or future forecasted) needed to mine, mill & process uranium as is being proposed. Current water rights are already a source of battle among neighbors. We don't have extra resources, and we can't afford to risk having our existing water sources contaminated.

2 - An increase in dust and pollution from traffic will exacerbate our increasing problems with dust events layering in our snowpack. Springtime dust layers, in an already decreasing volume of water content in our snowpack, increase the speed of snowmelt and decrease snow stability. As our local climate changes with increasing worldwide greenhouse gas emissions, we are already experiencing decreased snowmelt water supply to last us through dry summers.

Please... the DOE must reconsider the environmental impacts of reintroducing uranium mining and milling into western Colorado. Doing so will have detrimental consequences for upcoming decades in which we are already seeing an altered landscape of resources.

Sincerely,
Kim Wheels

Clean, renewable energy sources, and prompt clean-up of this federal uranium legacy provides the realistic and sensible future for western Colorado.

- A recent Gallup Poll shows that American want a stronger emphasis placed on domestic renewable energy production over oil and gas, coal and especially nuclear.
- A recent Colorado poll found that the majority of Coloradans strongly favor (56%) solar energy over nuclear energy (10%).
- Colorado has created aggressive goals to develop a renewable energy standard of 20% by 2020 as well as establishing the state as a national leader in this sector and developing up to 600,000 clean-energy jobs.
- The potential for renewable energy development, specifically solar, is high in the ULP.
- The uranium leases in the ULP are ideal for brownfield renewable energy development, providing clean domestic energy and jobs to the region.

The US reserve uranium should be managed for future use in the US, not short term exploitation by foreign interests

- The PEIS does not reveal that US uranium would be mined and sent to Canadian-controlled mills for

export to Canada, Korea, China.

- Taxpayers are already paying for DOE to manage and store billions of dollars worth of already mined uranium stockpiles.
- Tell DOE that until it cleans up the mess it made during the Cold War, further uranium mining should not be allowed.
- Should the US actually need these uranium reserves in the future, the most secure long term storage solution is for it to remain in the ground.
- The PEIS ignored dismal conditions at these mines, which reveal that remediation and contamination clean up should be an immediate priority.

The DOE must investigate, disclose, and evaluate actual conditions at each of uranium mines and lease tracts.

- "Remediation" claims in the PEIS are based on outdated information and assumptions as opposed to actual field analysis.
- Remediation would provide jobs now. Uranium extraction is uncertain dependent on the price/demand of uranium going up considerably.
- Some of these sites are in violation of Clean Water Act standards, are contaminating the Dolores River and should be clean up immediately.

DOE did not analyze an alternative that would reduce the number of leases.

- There is no consideration made to protect endangered or threatened species existing in the ULP.
- There is no consideration made for withdrawing the sites adjacent to the Dolores River to prevent water quality impacts.
- The recent State of the Rockies poll found that the majority of Coloradons feel that environmentally sensitive places should be protected from energy development.

The PEIS fails to adequately address climate change impacts.

- There is only superficial analysis of water quantity impacts from increased mining and milling in the region.
- The consequences of allocating an increasingly scarce water supply to mining operations intended to produce uranium for foreign demand is not considered.
- Air quality analysis fails to address a significant increase in dust creation from mining and milling activity and dispersion to downwind communities.

The ULP claims fall within the Dolores River Corridor, one of the iconic tributaries of the Colorado River. Impacts to this landscape and the habitat it provides for hundreds of species and recreation opportunities were not sufficiently considered.

- A cluster of the claims falls directly on the Dolores River and threatens the river daily due to lack of clean up.
- The Dolores Corridor provides habitat for Gunnison sage grouse, big horn sheep, endangered Colorado River fish and threatened river otter among others. Threats to these species were not adequately considered.
- We have the opportunity to preserve the Dolores River Basin for future generations as a natural gem of the American West. National and international recognition of this treasure will bring an increase in tourism and recreation dollars and provide long-term sustainable economy for the region. **We must think long term before we destroy sustainable development for short-term economic gain that will line the pockets of those outside the communities.**

The DOE must reconsider the PEIS using real field analysis of current site conditions, economic analysis of remediation and reuse of the sites vs re leasing and eventual taxpayer clean up and USFWS analysis of wildlife impacts

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Kim Wheels