



Wyoming  
DEPARTMENT OF Agriculture

Matthew H. Mead, *Governor*  
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*The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.*

June 14, 2012

Misty A. Hays, Deputy District Ranger  
Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest and Thunder Basin National Grassland  
Douglas Ranger District  
2250 East Richards Street  
Douglas, WY 82633

Dear Ms. Hays:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) authorizing Thunder Basin Coal Company, LLC (TBCC) to construct and install dewatering wells and associated facilities to fully develop existing coal leases on National Forest System by the USDA Forest Service (USFS).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As this proposed authorization and associated EA affects our agriculture industry, our natural resources, and the welfare of our citizens, it's important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The Draft EA briefly discusses existing conditions related to livestock grazing in the project area. However, it does not discuss the impacts of the TBCC project to livestock grazing or range improvements. Since the Draft EA is tiered to the Wright Area Coal Lease Applications Environmental Impact Statement (Wright EIS), we recommend adding a reference to the Wright EIS in the Draft EA. Under the Land Uses Environmental Consequences section, Alternative 2: Proposed Action, we recommend adding language referencing the Wright EIS and explaining that the impacts on livestock grazing management have been analyzed in the Wright EIS.

In conclusion, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft EA. We encourage continued attention to our concerns and look forward to hearing about and being involved in proposed actions and decisions.

Sincerely,

FOR Jason Fearneyhough  
Director

JF/jc

CC: Governor's Policy Office  
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts  
Wyoming Board of Agriculture

Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association

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