



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

December 30, 2009

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

Subject: Public Scoping Comment for North Antelope Rochelle and School Creek Mines Power Line Project.

Dear Misty Hays:

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Public Scoping Notice to prepare an environmental document under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to install a 69-kilovolt power line for use by the North Antelope Rochelle and School Creek Mines (Project) located within the Thunder Basin National Grasslands.

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 project affects our agriculture industry, our natural resources, and the welfare of our citizens, it's important we are kept informed of proposed actions and decisions and continue to be provided the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The Project is located within previous coal lease permit boundaries; however, it still proposes to cross approximately 4.6-miles of private lands. The Scoping Letter (dated December 4, 2009) fails to identify specific details on impacts occurring on private lands. The associated NEPA document needs to analyze all direct, indirect and cumulative impacts occurring to federal, state, private and adjacent lands located within the project area.

Livestock grazing is identified as the dominant land use in the project area. The WDA urges the Douglas Ranger District to include local land owners and grazing permittees in all discussions pertaining to the location of the power line and development of this environmental document. We appreciate the Douglas Ranger District's efforts on working with grazing permittees and private landowners and utilizing their irreplaceable, long-term, on-the-ground knowledge.

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Douglas Ranger District
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We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the scope of the proposed action. We encourage continued attention to our concerns, and we look forward to hearing about and being involved in future proposed actions and decisions.

Sincerely,


Jason Feameyhough
Director

JF/cw

CC: Governor's Planning Office
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming Board of Agriculture
Wyoming Stock Growers Association
Wyoming Wool Growers Association
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation
State Grazing Board
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts