

Public Statement to the Bureau of Land Management May 19, 2016 Submitted  
at Public Hearing in Salt Lake City at the Salt Palace Convention Center by  
Lynden V. Emerson, resident of Salt Lake City, Utah

*I come before you today to request the Bureau of Land Management to make every effort to ~~move its efforts to~~ meet the energy needs of Utah through alternative methods of energy production. I am here as a citizen, a mother, and an advocate for mitigating the serious effects of mining extraction on our health, on the climate, and on the viability of this planet to sustain human life.*

*First I want to say that I stand in compassion with the situation faced by workers in the mines. Many mining families have been working in mines for generations. Every day they risk their lives so that we, throughout Utah and states beyond, have the energy needed to go about our daily lives. It can be frightening to think that the only livelihood one knows is threatened. The great reality is that we live in an amazing time when technology is bringing us the hope of more effective, efficient, and far safer ways to harness the energy of natural sources such as the sun, wind, and water to create energy.*

*As a long time career transition professional, I know that it is possible to retrain oneself in a different mode of earning a living. I know because at age 50 and again at ages 60 and 70, I retrained myself to take on very different employment. It is possible and it is enlightening to do something different! I make a personal pledge today to work with governmental or private organizations to find ways to bring new and safer employment to members of the mining community. I know that life is fragile and we all can lose life at any moment. Yet the families of miners and miners themselves face additional stress of knowing that mining, like policing or firefighting, is a dangerous job. And those real or unseen stresses can cause fear which then translates into various physical and emotional health challenges. What I want for miners is safety and greater quality of life.*

*Many today will talk about the issues of air quality and climate change. I would like to offer a personal story about my daughter and the health challenges she has faced since moving to Utah 10 years ago. As a young adult she had never experienced respiratory illness. Since living here, she has suffered greatly from the inversions in this city. When the air pollution is severe she must use an inhaler. Because she doesn't get sufficient oxygen into her body, her body slows down and she is often unable to work. This situation has the domino effect of bringing on depression, which at times can be severe, leading her sometimes to the point where she wants to end her life. For me and for others knowing the far-ranging effects of air quality on both physical and mental health, I ask that we do everything in our power to reduce air pollution, so that we create a climate where all can live and flourish in health.*

*As a private citizen, I will do all that I am able, to create a better, cleaner, safer world for all of us in Utah. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to let those who work in mines know that together we can make a positive transition to alternative livelihoods, and for highlighting the serious personal consequences of air pollution.*