

## Comments on the Federal Coal Leasing Program

I moved to Utah a couple of years ago to enjoy the beautiful landscapes and clean air, but found that we have a problem out here with particulates in the air. My wife has some breathing problems and must use oxygen at night to help her sleep.

The continued use of coal mining only worsens the problems with our environment. Although coal mining has been important for income for some of our hard working population, we should focus on helping them to shift their skills to other important and growing areas of power production, such as wind and solar power, which are more environmentally friendly. Utah has plenty of sunshine and has the potential to provide energy without the harmful effects on the environment that coal has.

The Federal Coal Leasing Program has allowed our public lands to be used for commercial profit at horrendously low prices that have not kept up with the actual value of our land and resources. More importantly the federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management should not be used for the benefit of commercial enterprises at the expense of our environment and our health.

It is also important to note that many of the properties being considered are so close to, or adjacent to, our beautiful National Parks, which are the source of millions of dollars to the tourism industry of our state. Decimating the quality of air in our Parks and further damaging the quality of our public roads including historic scenic byways is not worth the bargain basement prices the BLM offers these lands for leasing. Then there is the question of rehabilitation of the lands after they have been robbed of their resources, and left as slag heaps when the Coal companies have gone bankrupt, as reported by the banking industry, which is reluctant to offer loans for further coal development.

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