

Mr. Wayne Stevens
PO Box 1404
Vernal, UT 84078-1404

ELM-UT-950
2016 MAY 17 PM 2:52

SALT LAKE CITY UT 840

16 MAY 2016 PM 3 L

KENT HOFFMAN
Deputy State Director Londs ADD
440 West 200 South Suite 50
SALT LAKE City, UT

84101-1345

84101-134599



I am planning to attend the Salt Lake City, Utah hearing on the Federal Coal Lease Program on May 19, 2016. I wanted to express my concerns about this program. I live in Vernal, Utah and I find myself opposing the proposed opening of federal lands for coal extraction for the following reasons.

By many indications, the coal industry is dying. There are many reasons for the decline of coal:

In the United States, 457 coal fired power plants are being retired, or being converted to natural gas or bio-fuels. Natural gas is by far, less expensive than coal. Natural gas is a clean fuel, however, it does little to slow, stop, or reverse climate change.

China, the world's largest coal importer, has reduced its coal imports by 30 to 40 plus percent. It produces about 33 percent of its electrical power from hydro, nuclear and renewable resources, specifically from wind, thus reducing its coal use.

India plans on stopping all coal imports and develop its own energy resources. That process has already begun. It costs 2 to 3 times more to import coal than it does to mine its own coal resources. India is also developing, using and mandating more renewable energy use and production.

The nation's and world's largest private coal company, Peabody Coal has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. According to Peabody strong regulations and cheap natural gas has caused a decline in the price of coal. Arch Coal, the nation's second largest coal company filed for bankruptcy in 2015.

Wall Street banks are lending less or not lending at all, money to coal companies. They feel the industry is a bad risk. According to Chiza Vitta, a metals and mining analyst with the credit rating firm Standard and Poor's stated: "There are always going to be periods of boom and bust. But what is happening in coal is a downward shift that is permanent."

If coal is a bad investment for Wall Street, it is certainly a bad investment for the tax paying people of the United States.

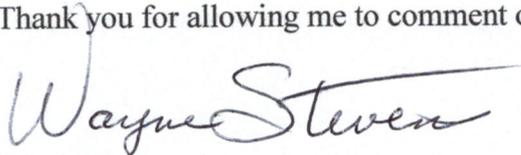
Not only is it a bad investment for our Government, opening these lands to coal will destroy vegetation needed to fight climate change as well as habitat for wildlife and areas for livestock grazing.

The coal industry is obviously dying. It is pointless to open lands for needless destruction which will ultimately leave reclamation, and its costs to the US tax payers.

Instead of opening public lands to coal extraction, these lands could be opened for commercial renewable energy production sites. This would leave hundreds of thousands acres of vegetation to remove carbon dioxide from the air, limit methane gas from coal mining from getting into the atmosphere, and leave lands for wildlife, recreation, and tourism. More than sixty percent of Scotland's power comes from wind turbines. Most of Morocco's electrical power is produced

from solar energy. The United States could do the same, if the government opened lands for renewable energy sites.

Thank you for allowing me to comment on the Federal Coal Lease program.



Wayne Stevens
P.O. Box 1404
Vernal, UT 84078

Bibliography:

sourcewatch.org: Existing US Coal Plants, Plant retirements and conversions

Clean Technica: India Shocks Australia, To Stop Coal Imports in 2-3 Years

Reuters, March 27, 2015: Beijing's Effort to Reduce Coal Burning Shows Results

Seeking Alpha July 17, 2015: New China Coal Data has Serious Implications for Peabody Energy

Wikipedia: Coal Mining in the United States

Reuters, April 13, 2015: China's Coal imports fall nearly half in 12 months as anti-pollution drive bites

Seirra Club May 07, 2016: Personal email

cnn.com/money: April 13, 2016: The largest U.S. coal company just filed for bankruptcy.

Fortune.com: Hers's Another Big Sign the Coal Industry is Burning Out

BLM-UT-950
2016 MAY 17 PM 2:52