

Emery County Public Lands Council

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Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
Western Region
P.O. Box 25065
Lakewood, CO 80225-0065

Dear OSMRE,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the OSMRE's oversight of DOGM's coal and abandoned reclamation programs. The Emery County Public Lands Council has the mission of representing the public on public lands interests in Emery County, Utah. We have always been in close communication with our citizens and believe we represent the views of the majority of our constituency.

Coal mining and uranium mining have been a very large and important part of the history and economy of Emery County. The majority of our citizens have either worked in one or other of those mining industries, or have been closely impacted by one or both. We support the State of Utah, Coal Regulatory Program and its management of the mining industry. We believe that the Coal industry has been regulated in a fair and equitable way by the UDOGM in most instances. We support continued primacy by the State in managing the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act. We believe that the State of Utah can best manage the programs and has the support of a majority of our citizens.

With that said we are very concerned and have always been concerned with certain facets of the Abandoned Mine Regulatory Program. We understand that the majority of abandoned mines lie on U.S. Federal lands, and that the BLM and U.S. Forest Service have responsibility for managing those lands. We believe that the historical importance of the abandoned mine sites has been overlooked and that our wishes have been in many cases ignored. Complete closure and obliteration of some of those sites has essentially wiped them from the face of the earth and has hidden them from history. The pioneer spirit of Emery County citizens is strong and being able to see, touch and feel our history is important to us. Many of the sites obliterated hold great importance to the descendants of those men and women that worked, sweated, bled and died during the mining period.

We recognize that there are safety hazards in some cases, however to use the blanket concern that all sites are unsafe ignores the fact that there have been few if any incidents where citizens have been injured on those sites. We strongly urge the OSM and the UDOGM to reconsider the practice of closing all sites and removing history. We urge the OSM and UDOGM to work closely with the BLM, the U.S. Forest Service to come to better solutions that preserve our history.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rod Player".

Rod Player

Emery County Public Lands Council