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DIVISION OF  
OIL, GAS AND MINING

January 6, 2001

Acting BLM Director  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

CC: Dave Darby

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[unclear], [unclear]

Dear Sir/Ma'am:

I am writing to urge you to stop a coal mining operation within the Desolation Canyon proposed wilderness—the largest block of unprotected roadless land in the lower 48 states! The proposed Lila Canyon Coal Mine should not be allowed to proceed... period. No more logging, no more ORV trails, and no more mining. It's time we drew a line in the sand and said enough is enough! Our remaining pristine public lands (and in particular the few remaining roadless areas) should be protected completely and preserved in their natural state.

As for the proposed mine:

- It would overlap both an existing Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and newly inventoried BLM wilderness units.
- The mine would also encroach on a Fremont rock shelter and other native cultural sites.
- And it would result in the dewatering of springs that are crucial to the survival of a unique band of desert bighorn sheep. Because the habitat in Lila Canyon is not found elsewhere in the area, a mine would result in the displacement and likely death of these sheep.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service has expressed the concern that impacts such as subsidence, altered hydrologic flows, and mining effluent may cause significant changes or losses in wildlife habitat, wetlands, riparian areas, stream flows, and water quality.
- The current BLM planning documents classify the area as a class III visual resource, meaning that visual changes are not permitted to dominate the landscape.
- The EA failed to answer critical questions such as where the bighorn would be displaced to, and how water sources contaminated by the mine might be connected to other local water sources. Without such data, it seems impossible for the BLM to make an informed decision.
- According to the law, the agency must not proceed without preparing a full-blown Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which thoroughly analyzes the potential impacts of this destructive mining operation.

For too long our public lands have been managed for the betterment of the corporate balance sheet and not for the betterment of the American public. Today Americans are demanding that these lands be preserved in their natural state, for the betterment of wilderness, wildlife,

hunting, and future generations. Please do all that you can to ensure that this happens, and **include me on your mailing list** for any future public involvement in this process. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
David A. Lien  
NCUA Examiner