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**State of Utah**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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October 31, 1997

To: File

Thru: Jesse Kelley, Senior Reclamation Specialist acting for *JK for Joe Helfrich*  
Joe Helfrich, Permit Supervisor, Compliance

From: Peter Hess, Reclamation Specialist III *PH*

RE: Degasification Well(s) Minor Exploration Permit, Cyprus Plateau Mining Corporation, Willow Creek Mine, ACT/007/038-97K, Folder #2, Carbon County, Utah

Cyprus Plateau is proposing to drill two degasification wells to intercept and bleed off methane encountered during the mining of the first two longwall panels developed in the "D" seam at the Willow Creek Mine. The holes will not intercept the "D" seam. They will be stopped 30 to 50 feet above the seam. Caving of the roof strata post mining will allow the methane to bleed off to the wells. Although MSHA requires "bleeder" entries to prevent methane accumulations in "gob" areas, Cyprus apparently feels that these extra precautions are necessary for the protection and safety of the miners employed therein, to preserve and protect the property and to expedite mining. Anticipated life/usage of the degas wells is projected to be five years. Anticipated start up of the first longwall panel is forecasted for the last week of December, 1997.

- The degas wells, designated as 97-30-5-DG and 97-30-2A-DG will be drilled in Section 30; (surface is regulated by the U.S. Dept of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management).
- I believe access to Section 30 will be from Cyprus surface ownership. It appears from Map 19-A, Revision 3 that access will take off from the NE end of the School House Canyon refuse pile.



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The BLM is the lead agency here. I have forwarded copies of 97K to the following individuals/agencies for their review and comment.

- 1) George Tetrault, BLM, Price, Utah
- 2) Ben Morris, DWR, Price, Utah
- 3) John Baza, Associate Director, Oil and Gas, DOGM, SLC, Utah

At this point, I would recommend that the Coal Program portion of the Division proceed with the review of 97K, in coordination with the various government agencies involved. At this point, (in speaking with Mr. Daron Haddock of the DOGM, SLC), I have a concern as to whether this is an exploration permit. Exploration permits are generally granted to determine geologic conditions immediately above and within a coal seam. As noted in the first paragraph of this letter, the holes will stop 30 to 50 feet short of the coal seam. Also, coal degasification is generally done prior to mining and not post coal extraction, as in this case. I believe we should touch base with MSHA to determine if these holes are really necessary. Is there a history of methane accumulation in gob areas in other mines of the immediate area?

In closing, there are too many questions here for this individual to answer alone. Obviously, we probably need some policy determinations. I have kept one copy of Cyprus' submittal for reference, and am forwarding all others (those remaining less the three mentioned on page one) to the DOGM, SLC.

All comments by Utah government agencies should be forwarded to Joe Helfrich, Permit Supervisor-Compliance, Utah Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining.

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cc: Mary Ann Wright, Associate Director of Mining, DOGM, SLC  
John Baza, Associate Director of Oil and Gas, DOGM, SLC  
Daron Haddock, Permit Supervisor, Permitting, DOGM, SLC  
Joe Helfrich, Permit Supervisor, Compliance, DOGM, SLC  
George Tetrault, USBLM, Price, Utah  
Ben Morris, Utah DWR, Price, Utah