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

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January 4, 2000

Brad Johnson
30 North Main
Box 122
Aurora, Utah 84620

Re: Reclaimed J.B. King Mine

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I am writing to you with the hope of imparting to you the importance of protecting the reclaimed JB King coal mine from the effects of cattle grazing. Please bear with me as I take a moment to explain.

The J.B. King coal mine was originally reclaimed in 1985. Reclamation means that the portals were sealed, the site was graded over and reshaped, then it was top soiled and reseeded with a native species mix by the operator, Western States Minerals Corporation (WSMC). In 1994, after much consternation and back and forth exchanges about the poor success of reclamation at the site among the federal Office of Surface Mining, WSMC, and the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, a dedicated environmental engineer at WSMC re-designed the reclamation for part of the mine site. He prepared a plan of augmentation which added sludge and rock to the site as a mulch. Thus, what you have seen as reclamation success at this mine, has been the result of 15 years growth, plus the result of the redesign in 1994.

Today, the Division is being asked by WSMC to consider bond release on this site. The standard in the federal and state laws require that for sites with less than 26 inches of precipitation, the bond must be held and the standard must be met for a period of **10 years** instead of 5 years (if it had over 26 inches). Field tests must be made in the last two years prior to bond release which statistically show that vegetation standards have been met, both in total cover at the site and in diversity of the plants which are surviving there. As you might quickly surmise, any grazing of the area keeps this site in a regulatory limbo by removing the one item which can release the site from a mine bond.

The Division of Oil, Gas and Mining has worked long and hard with the mine operator to achieve success at the site in order for the bond to be released. Additionally, we have spent many

hours inspecting the site, testing the pond, the soils and the vegetation for success. Thus, we have a stake in this site as well as the mine operator, the grazing leaseholder (also WSMC), and the landowner, State Trust Lands Administration.

Please help us to achieve our goal at this site where we can see the full cycle of mining, reclamation and, eventually, a post mining land use. We see this as a true achievement and we hope you will agree to help us reach this goal. If I can be of further assistance in explaining our role, I would very much appreciate the chance to talk to you. I am at (801) 538-5306. Thank you for taking the time to understand our situation.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Wright
Associate Director, Mining

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cc: Lowell Braxton, DOGM
P:\GROUPS\MINES\WP\AMAW\johnson.jbk.wpd
bcc: Buzz Gerrick
Tom Faddies