SPRUNGER'S MINERALS
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CC VO Wayne
Done VS 2-16-99
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S/023/018
S/023/057

October 16, 1998

Representative Michael Styler
Delta, Utah

Dear Sir:

Thank you for contacting the DOGM on our behalf. They have reduced our annual permit fees from $600 to $300. We had requested one permit ($100 annual fee) since our total disturbance is so small (under 1 acre) and the disturbed areas are so close together (within a 6 mile radius). Also, the DAQ is charging us a $125 "processing fee" even though no permit is required. The State of Utah seems bent on eliminating small miners. A DOGM official, Tom Munson, told us that a lot of people are closing out their mining activities since the imposition of DOGM's fees.

You may remember that my husband and I collect and wholesale mineral specimens (crystals such as bixbyite, topaz, quartz, etc.) for a living. Our mining activities are small, involving mostly hand tool work, and we work six different locations for a variety of material. From the DOGM fee schedule (enclosed), one sees that, for a large mining operation of less than 50 acres, the fee is no more than $350 and would probably be much less because the fee is prorated according to actual acreage disturbed/bonded. For the DOGM to charge us $300 for only 1 acre of disturbance is not fair.

The BLM supervises all mining activities on federal lands, has stringent reclamation requirements, and sends out an inspector twice yearly to active mines no matter how small the surface disturbance. Duplication of effort by state agencies is wasteful. There is no BLM fee.

Two other states, Arizona and Montana, where we also have claims, do not require permits or fees for mining operations under 5 acres. Would you consider sponsoring a Small Miners Relief Bill which would exempt all mining operations in Utah which are under 5 acres from state imposed fees? At present if a prospector/miner wants to drill one hole and blast for mineral samples or take one scoop with a backhoe, he must first pay the state $225 (DOGM $100 & DAQ $125). Needless to say, these fees discourage small mining. Small miners contribute to the economy and in the past have made discoveries of major deposits of minerals (such as the Brush Beryllium deposit) which were later developed by large mining companies. A Relief Bill would help to insure the survival of small, independent miners who are already endangered by new federal laws, regulations, and added expenses.

Sincerely,

Mike Sprunger

Sandra Sprunger