

August 10, 2009

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Environmental Quality Council, Docket #09-1101
122 W. 25th St., Herschler Bldg., Rm. 1714
Cheyenne, WY 82002

**Jim Ruby, Executive Secretary
Environmental Quality Council**

Dear Members of EQC,

As a resident of Cora, Wyoming, a founding member of CURED, and a visitor for over 55 years to the Wind River Range and its environs, I am writing to register my dismay at the air quality in Sublette County and to urge you to support our petition to impose an ozone standard of 65ppb for this particularly endangered region of the state.

There is no need, I am sure, to rehearse with you the history of elevated ozone levels in Sublette County, especially in recent years. Suffice to say, they have reached concentrations that are undeniably dangerous to human health. Equally undeniably, they are directly attributable to the frenetic development of gas and oil in the Jonah Field and the Pinedale Anticline (even if specific weather conditions are involved); and, inexplicably, they are tolerated under standards and enforcement practices that I believe are unconscionably lax.

The Pinedale area has suffered enough. The gas field development has seriously diminished Pinedale as a town and as a community. It has brought us heightened levels of noise, dust, crime, traffic, and domestic violence. It has threatened our ground water. It has destroyed our night sky. It has inflicted intolerable disturbances on private property and on persons' homes. It has industrialized a region that was once bucolic and pristine. It now threatens our lives.

It hardly suffices for the State to instruct the area's residents to modify their behavior when the ozone levels become dangerously high. Rather than instructing us on how to behave, the State's duty, surely, is to direct the principal perpetrators of this assault to public health to stop and desist, to put in place equipment and practices that eliminate such dangers, and to impose severe fines and restrictions on companies that fail to comply. It is not credible to suggest, as DEQ did several years ago, that, voluntarily, every company is doing everything possible to prevent unhealthy ozone levels.

The repeated failure of the oil and gas industry to conduct its activities in a way that comports even with existing ozone standards is, I would suggest, a compelling reason for imposing more stringent standards for Sublette County. Just possibly, if regulators and extractors were required to aim at a 65ppb standard, residents might have reason to hope that something like the current standards would then be met. Of course, a better reason to lower the standard is that the existing one does not adequately protect human health; and

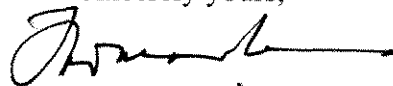
while it would be preferable if 65 ppb were the standard statewide, that might impose an excessive economic burden on some regions, especially where the affected human population is extremely small. Here, by contrast, a sizable population is immediately affected by elevated ozone levels and the cost to industry to prevent this (or to make its occurrence extremely unlikely) is (relative to its profits) extremely small indeed, especially (and incredibly) in light of recent promises of federal money to help defray such expenses.

The petition to impose more stringent ozone standards in Sublette County is aimed, principally, at protecting public health. But it is my understanding that reducing ozone precursors would have the salutary effect of also reducing the presence of compounds that contribute mightily to the ubiquitous haze that now regularly shrouds the region, obscuring one's view of the entire Wind River Range. So much for a Class One viewshed. But worse still: a month ago, to my utter dismay, I discovered that the haze is not confined to the borders of the Winds: it is in the heart of the mountains, in Titcomb Basin, where summer had yet to arrive.

In sum, there are compelling reasons to adopt a more stringent ozone standard, especially for Sublette County. The principal reason, of course, is to protect human health. There is, in addition, some small hope of reducing the LA-like smog that now irritates our eyes and lungs and nearly hides from view the mountains we love -- and love to see.

I respectfully request that this Council embrace CURED's petition to have the ozone standard set at 65ppb for Sublette County.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas R. Kearns
P.O. Box 283
Cora, WY 82925