

BEFORE THE WYOMING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

In the Matter of)	
Petition to Establish Primary and)	
Secondary Wyoming Ambient Air Quality)	Docket No. 09-1101
Standards for Ozone that are More Stringent)	
than the National Ambient Air Quality)	
Standards)	

Comments of the Powder River Basin Resource Council

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the petition put forward by the Citizens United for Responsible Energy Development (CURED) and other residents of Sublette County. We appreciate the hard work of the citizens bringing the petition and endorse its contents. We also greatly appreciate the time and consideration of the Council regarding this important matter.

The 2009 Budget Request of the Department of Environmental Quality stated, “energy development activities, along with the increased truck and rail traffic they bring, contribute to a strain on Wyoming’s available air resource.”¹ It is important that our state agencies, such as the Environmental Quality Council, respond to this “strain” and protect us citizens from the harmful effects of this pollution. We believe the petition before you is a positive step the state should take in that direction.

Since the founding of our organization in 1973, one of the central issues we have worked on is the protection of Wyoming’s air resources. First addressing the issue as related to coal strip mines and power plants and later with coalbed methane and deep gas developments, our members have remained resolute in believing that one of the most important roles of our environmental agencies is to protect air quality. The natural beauty of our state, as well as our industries and overall economic activity, including agriculture and recreation, are dependent on a high level of air quality. Most important, as the petition points out, the health of our citizens is directly related to the quality of the air we breathe.

We believe the scientific information submitted with the petition convincingly documents the need for a more stringent ozone standard. We will not repeat that information here, but encourage the Council to fully review it and give it due consideration during this process. States have the ability to move beyond the federal floor established by EPA standards and we believe that in this case the science clearly warrants such a move.

Additionally, we believe that this more stringent standard should be applied state-wide. This issue is critically important to our members who live throughout the state. In all corners of Wyoming, industrial development is impacting our air resources. Unfortunately, most areas in the state do not have sufficient air quality monitoring to determine ozone values; however, the monitoring we do have shows significant impacts wherever monitoring exists. For instance, air

¹ 2009-2010 Biennium Unit Supplemental Budget Narrative, Submitted by the Office of the Governor, State of Wyoming, on behalf of the Department of Environmental Quality.

quality monitors in Campbell County document ozone levels at near non-attainment of NAAQS standards and above the petition's proposed standard.²

Since the public health consequences of ozone exposure are the same throughout the state, we agree with the Department of Health's recommendation that "there should be a statewide uniform standard."³ Air pollution does not recognize county borders and the cumulative impacts of state-wide industrial development underscore the need for a stronger state-wide ambient standard.

A stronger standard state-wide will establish in all of Wyoming's counties the fact that citizens and government regulators value our air resources and the health of our citizens. The tougher standard should not prevent economic development anywhere in the state, but instead will protect one of our most important economic resources – air quality.

We thank the Council for your consideration of these comments and for all of your work on behalf of Wyoming communities.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob LeResche", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bob LeResche
Chair, Powder River Basin Resource Council
934 N. Main St.
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone: 307-672-5809
Fax: 307-672-5800

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² According to DEQ information submitted with the March 12, 2009 request to declare Sublette County in non-attainment for ozone NAAQS, the 2006-2008 three-year average was 0.073 ppm for the Thunder Basin ozone monitor and 0.066 ppm for the Campbell County monitor.

³ Memorandum from Brent D. Sherard, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P., Director and State Health Officer, Wyoming Department of Health to Wyoming Environmental Quality Council, July 14, 2009.