

**Statement of Jared Rogerson, Citizen of Sublette County, to the Environmental Quality Council on the Ozone Petition for Rulemaking, EQC Docket No. 09-1101 - June 3, 2009 Rock Springs Meeting**

I am Jared Rogerson, a resident of Pinedale and a citizen concerned about the health impacts of ground level ozone in Sublette County. I am grateful to have the opportunity to provide a statement on behalf of myself and of the citizens of one of the prettiest places in the world. I'm a local singer/songwriter and as such have had countless opportunities to meet and talk with people of all backgrounds in the area. Let me say this- although high ozone levels may be seasonal, the topic is hot all year long. I've heard the voices of parents, grandparents, scientists, energy industry workers, outfitters, ranchers, and others from all types of businesses and the theme is the same when it comes to clean air for Sublette County. I have read the petition in full and ensure you it is representative of the views and opinions of the public. There are a few concerns that I have heard expressed to me about the petition. The first is whether or not it will be taken seriously. Having the opportunity to meet with you today is a signal to me that the petition is being taken seriously. I thank you for that. The other concern is over what elements, directly or indirectly, might factor into decision-making: economics or human health.

In our growing community of Sublette County, we've experienced a number of changes associated with a rapidly growing population. Some of these changes have dealt with rules of the road. One example that comes to mind is the speed limit. When a lower speed limit is needed to protect public safety, the change is made without consideration of what the driver's speed preference may be or how much earlier the alarm clock must be set for a timely arrival to work. The new driving standard is set and the level of safety is improved. Likewise, is the public perception of ozone regulations. We are concerned for all of the public, including the elderly, the children, those who work and play outside, and everyone else. It must be noted that the changes that must occur to meet lower 'limits' are irrelevant to setting of those limits, regulations, standards, or whatever they may be termed. It is human health that must come first. The very wise Abraham Lincoln once said something that I think is especially fitting here. He said, "A goal properly set is halfway reached." Let me repeat that, "A goal properly set is halfway reached." Our plea is that the first half of the Sublette County ozone issue be solved through a properly set goal. As has been stated over and over, the science is "overwhelming" on what a properly set goal is for ozone levels.

I am confident that if a better goal is set, that goal can be reached. I'll provide an example of why. In winter of 2009, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) began issuing Ozone Warnings in Sublette County based on weather predictions (i.e., the environmental precursors of ozone). I think these warnings can be great tools. When the warnings came about, industry took it upon themselves to lower their emissions in an effort to reduce the formation of ozone. It is no secret how ozone is formed. The general public understands that now. Industry understands that. I believe it was partly through Industry's efforts in 2009 that ozone levels didn't exceed current standards. But without a standard that protects our health, we are still at risk of breathing poisonous air and experiencing the serious health effects that may accompany that.

I would know; I have asthma. I was diagnosed as having asthma in 2008. Let me personalize this for just a moment by telling my story. I attended college on a full-ride rodeo scholarship riding bareback broncs. Bareback riding is often referred to as the most physically demanding event in rodeo. I rode professionally from 1997 through 2003 and continued it as a hobby until recently. Besides competing as a professional athlete, I have always traversed high elevation, rugged mountaintops and still do today throughout the Wind River Mountains. I'm telling you



this because in all of the arduous physical activities I've engaged in, never did I have any respiratory problems until just a few winters ago when I began noticing difficulty breathing. Coughing and wheezing became severe enough to keep me awake most of the night. Being reluctant to visit the doctor, I would wait until the symptoms would dissipate for the most part in summer and I would forget how bad it once was, until it returned again the following winter. Ironically, what lead to my asthma diagnosis was a rodeo injury. I underwent surgery on a torn biceps tendon and returned to my home to recover. In short time, I began experiencing some sort of respiratory infection. My doctor sent me straight to the hospital thinking it was pneumonia. To skip to the end of the story... there was no pneumonia, but a few visits, a chest x-ray, pulmonary tests, etc. showed that I had asthma. But here's the interesting part: my asthma gets worse in the winter and then it pretty much goes away in the summer, which, according to my doctor, is the opposite of what you would expect to see with asthma. Whether it's related or not, my asthma directly correlates with the cycles of ozone peaks in our county. In all that I have since read on the subject, I think there are probably a variety of reasons why I now have asthma, but I don't think I ever would have developed it in the absence of our poisonous air.

It was actually between the time that I started noticing respiratory problems (and thinking I was dying), and the time of my asthma diagnosis, that we, the residents of Sublette County became aware of the issue at hand: high concentrations of ground level ozone. I, like many others, began attending all kinds of meetings to express my concerns and learn about the problem, the regulation, and the science behind it all. I met lots of other concerned citizens, people who had asthma and other lung problems, parents concerned about their children, and elderly concerned about their health. We found out that the federal government wasn't adequately protecting our health. They weren't even following the advice of their own scientists. Most disheartening of all, we found out that it would take a very, very long time for the federal government to make any changes even if we got the ball rolling immediately. And then there's often this notion that we have to 'prove' that the ozone is affecting our health to garner support for any change, when scientists and health experts have already told us what would happen. We shouldn't have to get sick before something can be done, though much anecdotal evidence already does exist. I'm here today representing the public, my peers, my friends, and especially those of us who are blatantly not protected under the current federal ozone standard. I am the asthmatic. I am the active person working and recreating year-round in the outdoors. I'm the grandchild concerned about the health of our grandparents. I wonder... how old will our children be before we are ensured they can finally breathe safe air? What damage will have been done? When is it too late?

I've heard the ozone problem in Sublette County called a "phenomenon." But the science is clear on the matter including the cause, the solution, and impacts on the health of all of us. However, the conditions of winter ozone formation in Sublette County *are* unique. **It is quite clear that this is a very localized problem and as such we strongly believe requires a localized solution.** We can't afford to wait for the federal government to do something that makes Sublette County, recently one of the most pristine environments in the world, a safe place to breathe. For this reason we have come forward with this citizen's request. I am grateful to those who have arisen as leaders in our community on this issue. I'm grateful for the work that has been put into the details of the petition document. It is well written, thorough, and covers both science and regulation in detail. It is the voice of the people. Thank you.