



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

June 15, 2015

OSMRE Colowyo Mine EA
C/O Nicole Caveny
Western Region Office, OSMRE
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202-3050

Delivered via Email: OSM-Colowyo-Mine-EA@OSMRE.gov

Dear Ms. Caveny:

Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) strongly supports the reissuance of the ColoWyo coal mining permit currently being reviewed through an Environmental Assessment (EA) being conducted by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) in response to the Colorado Federal District Court ruling. This mine has been operating in full compliance with all federal and state environmental requirements since the issuance of the original permit 8 years ago and has been recognized with numerous awards for its environmental and reclamation efforts and successes.

The ColoWyo mine operates in Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties in Northwest Colorado where it employs 220 people directly and hundreds indirectly. The economies of communities in Northwest Colorado are inextricably tied to the ColoWyo and Trapper mines which produce coal for the coal fired power plant located in Craig, Colorado known as Craig Station. The economies of these communities will be irreparably harmed should the ColoWyo mine be closed resulting in approximately \$206 million in lost economic activity. There will also be a local, state and federal tax revenue shortfall estimated at \$12 million jeopardizing government services in the area.

Craig Station provides affordable, reliable electricity to customers in many rural and economically depressed communities. These customers are disproportionately affected by increased electricity rates. Continued elimination of plants like Craig Station furthers the decline of the security of the national power grid. NERC and FERC have both indicated that the security of the nation's electrical grid is in decline and the loss of power plants, like Craig Station, can only serve to exacerbate that situation.

The court's decision in this matter was not based on a violation of any air or water quality laws or regulations. The decision agreed with claims that OSM did not involve the public

or take a "hard look" at environmental impacts in its decision to issue the ColoWyo permit in 2007. Yet over the years since the permit was issued, there have been no significant environmental impacts as a result of the mining activity or the burning of the coal in the local power plant. The reality is that there would be greater environmental impacts should Craig Station have to go outside the area for its supply of coal.

It is imperative to the communities in Northwest Colorado that this well run mining operation remain active and its permits be continued unhindered. AGNC members stand ready to provide support in the completion of the EA and a finding of "No Significant Impact" in the review of the permits for the ColoWyo coal mine.

Sincerely,



Jeff Eskelson, Chairman
Rio Blanco County



Martin Chazen, Vice-Chairman
City of Grand Junction