

United States House of Representatives

House Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

Testimony of Shawn West Taylor, Energy Policy Development Program Manager, Wyoming Energy Commission

On behalf of, Governor Jim Geringer and the State of Wyoming

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Madam Chairman and distinguished members of the Subcommittee my name is Shawn Taylor and I am the Energy Policy Program Manager for the Wyoming Energy Commission. It is a privilege for me to be here today to testify on behalf of Governor Geringer and the State of Wyoming and to discuss legislation that addresses a problem that is very significant to the West and more specifically to Wyoming.

The coal and coalbed methane industries have created thousands of jobs in the state of Wyoming; they provide millions of dollars to our schools and were major factors in our states budget going from a projected \$200 million shortfall to a surplus of almost \$700 million over the past fiscal year. So I think we are rather fortunate as a state to be here today to talk about how we can resolve conflicts between these two industries and continue to develop these resources that will not only bring continued revenue to the state but also contribute to our nations energy security.

As you know coal currently is used to produce over half the nation's electricity, 17% of that comes from Wyoming and the Powder River Basin. However the national trend is moving towards natural gas produced electricity. Wyoming, and more importantly the Powder River Basin, has an abundance of both of these resources and that is one of the reasons Governor Geringer and the state legislature created the Wyoming Energy Commission, to find ways to capitalize on our supply and the nations demand.

In Wyoming where nearly all the coal and over half of the oil and gas is owned by the federal government and managed by the BLM, I think it is imperative to have a director in place to provide guidance for this management and to enforce the BLM's "Policy on Conflicts between Coal Bed Methane and Coal Development", which was issued in February of last year. Having said that, I urge our Senator's to do what they can in the other chamber to get Mrs. Clark's confirmation process expedited.

In an age when people are all too eager to head to the courtroom to settle disputes it is encouraging to have legislation such as H.R. 2952 that will establish rules, timelines and procedures to resolve conflicts between these two critical industries. This legislation is a good start, it doesn't include the entire Power River Basin, however once we prove that we can do it right in Wyoming I think other states will follow suit. The State and Governor Geringer supports this legislation and thanks you Madam Chairman and Senators Enzi and Thomas for giving this issue the proper attention it deserves. Thank you.