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Jim Ruby, Executive Secretary
Environmental Quality Council

Environmental Quality Council
c/o DEQ Water Quality Division
ATTN: David Waterstreet
122 West 25th Street
Herschler Building - 4W
Cheyenne, WY 82002

By FAX delivery

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are writing today concerning Appendix H, Section 20, of the Ag Protection Policy. As longtime ranchers in the Powder River Basin we have seen our ranch affected by many aspects of the oil and gas industry, including for the last 10 years, coal bed methane development. The most troubling aspect of the recent development has been due to the discharge of water onto the ground, resulting in irreversible damage to the soils and vegetation in our area, not to mention the wanton waste of a valuable resource.

In considering the changes to the Ag Protection Policy, we hope that you will place agricultural uses of the land and water as your highest priority. In order to do this the water quality discharge standards must be set at safe levels for livestock and wildlife as recommended by the University of Wyoming Study: <1,000 mg/l for sulfur, <500 mg/l for TDS, <2,000 Fluoride, and less than 1,000mg/l for sodium. Furthermore, to protect the integrity of soils and vegetation, the EQC needs to require limits for CBM discharges not to exceed and EC of 1330 or an SAR of 5. These limits need to apply year around to apply to naturally and artificially irrigated lands.

We believe that the limits set for the ag protection policy should apply to all naturally irrigated lands regardless of the size. Ranchers with stream bottoms less than 20 acres and 50 feet wide find these areas just as valuable for grazing and haying as folks with larger areas. The limits on acreages are simply arbitrary and have no meaning in the real world.

We support the idea of "irrigation waivers" that will allow the use of CBM water effluent for irrigation provided the water is contained on those private lands where the waiver applies. Discharge downstream may be a violation of the Clean Water Act.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns, and for all the time and effort you expend on the Council on behalf of the people in Wyoming.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy and Robert Sorenson