

The Honorable Brad Miller, Ranking Member
Energy and Environment Subcommittee
House Science, Space, and Technology Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sent by email

February 13, 2012

Dear Congressman Miller,

On behalf of Pavillion Area Concerned Citizens (PACC) thank you for your efforts in bringing the contamination issues in the Pavillion area of Wyoming to the Energy and Environment Subcommittee of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee. We appreciate your help to make sure the information about Pavillion is thoroughly reviewed and that concerns from impacted residents are entered into the record. As you know, our members asked to be put on record as fully supporting the EPA Pavillion groundwater contamination investigation and draft report of contamination in the Pavillion area.

Governor Mead has charged the Wyoming Water Development Commission with investigating options for household water replacement in the impacted Pavillion area. Although replacement for our contaminated household water is important, we are still troubled that the state continues to protect Industry. Rather than holding the responsible parties accountable for the contamination they've caused in the Pavillion area, the state is asking impacted residents and the public to pay for replacement water systems. We feel it is of the utmost importance that the polluters, rather than the impacted public, pay for the damage they have caused. It is extremely important that the EPA continue their investigation to fully determine the extent of contamination in our community. We need to understand the source of contamination and we need resolution for not only our household water contamination, but also our stock water contamination, our compromised air quality, diminished property and most importantly the serious health impacts we now have. Why should impacted residents and other citizens pay for the contamination impacts, remediation or water replacement systems?

We want to thank you for bringing our position to the discussion during the February 1, 2012 hearing, and have the following questions about some of the testimony.

As was discussed during the February 1 hearing, Louis and Donna Meeks drilled a water well that blew out from natural gas after it was drilled to 540 feet. Even though the WOGCC has played an instrumental part in the Pavillion area investigation, Mr. Doll seems to be uninformed about the circumstances of the Meeks' water well blowout.

In regards to the Meeks' water well depth, Mr. Doll testified, "I believe that was in that nine hundred to a thousand foot range." In an April 7, 2008 Wyoming State Engineer

letter (enclosed), the WOGCC opinion of what happened to the Meeks' water well is as follows.

“The Wyoming Oil and Gas conservation Commission’s opinion of what caused the problems in the first Meeks #2 well was that the “blowout” was the result of the water well driller drilling to 540 feet, finding a good sand, and blowing the hole dry in an attempt to determine water deliverability. Because this is a gas bearing zone, the unloaded hole proceeded to produce gas.”

Mr. Doll was obviously confused about the depth of the water well and we wonder if his opinion of the gas bearing zone is the 540 feet zone stated above or the nine hundred to a thousand feet zone he testified to. We also wonder why the state continues to permit water wells into a “gas bearing zone”. Even on the Meeks' property, Mr. Meeks has received a permit extension to drill a water well to seven hundred feet (enclosed). The extension makes recommendations to Mr. Meeks outlined in W.S. 41-3-931. Are these recommendations made to everyone applying for a water well permit? How is this permitting process protective of Wyoming citizens, private property and the mineral resource?

When asked about the PACC membership, Mr. Doll said he didn't know who the members are or how long they've lived in the Pavillion area. When asked about PACC chair, John Fenton, Mr. Doll said he believed Fenton had moved to Pavillion after the gas wells were drilled. Mr. Doll is apparently as confused about the residents he claims to represent as he is about the contamination itself. PACC members are long time residents who have farmed and ranched in the Pavillion area for many years. They are not outsiders trying to push an agenda. They are residents who are trying to understand what they are contaminated with, how it is affecting them, who is responsible and how it will be remediated. The membership includes Jeff Locker, who has lived in Wyoming his entire life. He and Rhonda have been on their current farm for over 25 years. Donna and Louis Meeks have lived in Wyoming their entire lives and have been on their farm for 37 years. John Fenton has lived in Fremont County for over 37 years and in the Pavillion area for over 12. John's wife Catherine has lived on the family place they now farm with her parents Marvin and Evelyn Griffin for 46 years. They moved to their farm before the gas wells were drilled. Shirley Knight was born and raised in Fremont County. She and her husband Harold Knight have lived in the Pavillion area for 35 years. Lucille and George Borushko have lived in the Pavillion area for 15 years. We invite Mr. Doll to tour the Pavillion area where we would be willing to better educate him about our community.

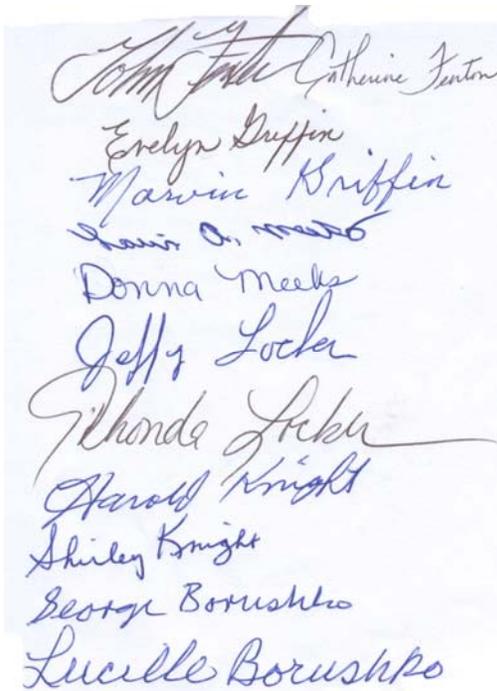
During the February 1 hearing, in subsequent meetings and through public comments, Wyoming's state representatives continue to say they believe the contamination in the Pavillion area is not from oil and gas operations or fracking. They continue to protect the interests of the oil and gas industry rather than the citizens they say they represent. After years of refusing to investigate the contamination in the Pavillion area, they now attack the EPA investigation and say the state should be in charge. The state agencies have continually told the impacted residents that they do not have the funds or manpower

to investigate contamination issues. Where did the Wyoming state agencies suddenly find funding, manpower and expertise to address the extremely complicated issues in the Pavillion area? Why aren't they demanding the disclosure of all fluids used during drilling, fracking and production of the Pavillion/Muddy Ridge gas field? Finally, why doesn't the state demand that all samples taken by industry and subsequent test results from the Pavillion area be provided to the state and the public?

After years of looking to the state for answers, we fear that the state of Wyoming's goal is to protect the oil and gas industry. We believe they will do so at the expense of the citizens they are charged to protect and represent, and if left in charge of this investigation, will never conduct an investigation that will determine the true extent and source of the contamination in the Pavillion area. These are among the reasons we support the EPA Pavillion groundwater contamination investigation, the draft report of contamination in the Pavillion area, and all future EPA investigations in the Pavillion area.

The following PACC members thank you on behalf of our organization.

Sincerely,



Catherine Jentson
Evelyn Duffin
Marwin Briffin
Louis Meeks
Donna Meeks
Jeffy Locker
Rhonda Locker
Harold Knight
Shirley Knight
George Borushko
Lucille Borushko

Enclosures: Louis Meeks request for water well permit changes
Correspondence from Wyoming State Engineer

Cc: Congressman Eddie Bernice Johnson,
Congresswoman Lynn C. Woolsey

Congressman Ben Ray Lujan
Congressman Paul D. Tonko
Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren
Congressman Jerry McNerney