

Dianna Reams
31510 Highway 141
Naturita, CO 81422
970-428-3426

May 1, 2014

Representative KC Becker
House Transportation and Energy Committee
House of Representatives
Denver, CO 80012

RE: SB 14-192

Dear Representative Becker and Committee Members:

The Nucla Naturita Area Chamber of Commerce created the West End Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC – yes, we have some fun with the name) last fall in an effort to bring industry into the area, including uranium and vanadium mining. When Black Range Minerals devised the ablation method that could be performed at the mine sites, it created several very positive outcomes for mining in this area:

1. Because of this mining method, which by the way is currently allowed under federal and state rules to be considered a form of mining, this means no new requirements for licensure.
2. The ablation method reduces the ore so up to 90% of the truck traffic is reduced. This is a huge human health and safety issue addressed by this mining method, particularly on the mining roads since dust abatement would be considerably reduced as well (#3 pollutant in the state).
3. The ablation mining method also cuts approximately 90% of mill waste at the plant, a huge concern for reclamation and remediation.
4. The ablation mining method could be used to re-work mill and mine waste piles, reducing those as well. This lowers the cost for future reclamation significantly.
5. This is the big one for the Chamber, all of the positives that come with this new technology would stabilize and reduce the cost to produce ore per pound, creating a stable ore stream with the ability to ward off market fluctuations and breaking the historical boom/bust cycle of this industry.

With uranium and vanadium being the one natural resource we have in abundance, this is a huge opportunity for us. There are significant questions from the mining/milling industry with SB 14-192 that the ablation method would be considered a milling function being performed at the site (again, this is not the case under current regulations), thereby slowing the permitting process and increasing the costs significantly.

The Senate has seen their way to amend the original bill that will allow this mining method under current regulation however when they amended the bill, the timeline requirements for Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) was excluded. The timeline is critical since extended time to receive licensure is very expensive and creates a significant roadblock for industry. This brings up a second concern with this bill in regard to CDPHE. There is no funding for this program to CDPHE. It is very difficult to get any type of request through this agency due to the lack of manpower or the absence of prescribed timelines, costing the state commerce and consequently, jobs in the areas needing them most, the entire Western Slope of the State but most notably, the West End.

Please reintroduce the prescribed timeline for CDPHE and maintain the amendments as presented. It is very difficult in rural areas to prosper economically and therefore socially, without the ability to capitalize on the natural resources at hand.

Please understand, we live in this area and want all commerce that occurs here to be safe. Water is a particularly precious commodity due to the desert environment. We are not advocating poor water quality in exchange for jobs. I just wonder what the impetus is behind this action. Do we need more regulation or is it sufficiently covered in current federal and state law?

We believe we are moving forward rapidly with clear objectives that are attainable and sustainable. Legislative action such as SB 14-192 has the ability to move not only our area forward in this regard but further Colorado as an industry leader working well with environmental concerns at the forefront. The timeline and the amendments are critical to this very delicate balance required.

Respectfully,

Dianna Reams