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OFFICE OF
TENÓ RONCALIO

April 16, 1972

Congressman Teno Roncalio
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Congressman Roncalio:

I am enclosing some material which I think may be of interest to you, since you have been the most receptive Representative of the people of Wyoming, in regard to questioning the Wagon Wheel Project in Sublette County.

Included in the enclosures is a copy of my letter to President Nixon in reply to a letter (also enclosed) from Robert J. Catlin of the Atomic Energy Commission, which he wrote in reply to an earlier letter of mine to the President.

Also enclosed is a copy of a letter from Senator Edward Kennedy, and Julius Rubin, of the AEC, which relate to a letter of mine to Senator Kennedy.

I hope you will note the similarity (can it be coincidental?) in the letters, especially the word "misunderstanding". This is, apparently, to be the AEC tact in fending off inquiries from our Representatives in the Congress, in order to whitewash their poor public relations, and inadequate research.

If, and when, we do have hearings on the Wagon Wheel Project in Pinedale, please stress the need for an independent panel of overseers, unrelated to the Government. The "hearings" in Meeker and Denver, Colorado last month, were the most obvious "whitewash abuses of free speech" imaginable. These hearings are not fair to the people who must live with these plowshare experiments.

Your willingness to assist us in our efforts is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Phyllis
Phyllis Birr

Wagon Wheel Information Committee
Pinedale, Wyoming

Enclosures

April 16, 1972

President Richard M. Nixon
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Nixon:

My last letter to you was forwarded to Mr. Robert J. Catlin of the Atomic Energy Commission for a reply. I am enclosing a copy of his letter, and of mine to him.

I respectfully request that you take the time to read the enclosed article which gives the comments of our Committee in reply to the Wagon Wheel Project Draft Environmental Statement by the AEC.

I think you will find, upon reading this article, and by requesting a copy of the the AEC environmental statement on the project, the type of "research" which is being carried out by the Atomic Energy Commission in regard to these experiments conducted by them in the Rocky Mountain States.

The AEC is entirely too autonomous, and has a flagrant disregard for the people in the areas in which these experiments are carried out.

The recent AEC Hearings in Meeker, and Denver, Colorado were a farce. "We set the rules and you play by them" is the theme at these hearings. It is a vehicle for placating people. Perhaps that is because if they had a fair accounting of both sides of the question, by scientists of equal status, they would not be able to whitewash the public's objections so easily.

Surely you must be aware of the growing concern in this area, and all over the Country, concerning the growing use of so-called "peaceful uses for atomic energy" without the proper foresight for the dangers involved therein.

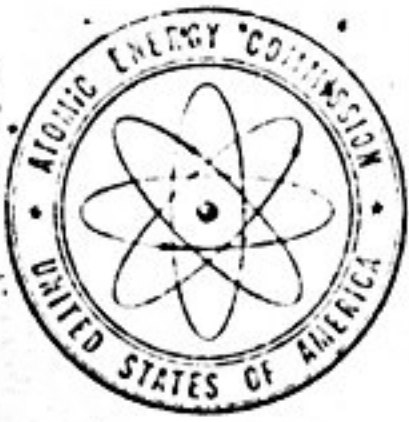
We urge you to order a halt to nuclear stimulation of natural gas fields, there are other, adequate methods for releasing the gas, and to familiarize yourself with these activities in the Rocky Mountain States.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Birr
Phyllis Birr
Wagon Wheel Information Committee
Pinedale, Wyoming

cc: Senator Clifford Hansen
Senator Gale McGee
Representative Teno Roncalio

Enclosure



UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

April 7, 1972

Mrs. Vincent Birr
Box 249
Pinedale, Wyoming 82941

Dear Mrs. Birr:

Your letter to President Nixon has been forwarded to me for reply. I regret that Project Wagon Wheel, which is under study by the Atomic Energy Commission and the El Paso Natural Gas Company, has been the cause for serious concern on your part.

I believe you are aware of the draft environmental impact statement for the proposed project; however, I am enclosing another copy for your convenience. In it you will find discussions of the central issues of the project, including why it is being considered for a site in Wyoming and why nuclear stimulation is thought necessary to produce the gas.

The concern you express about the possibility of the contamination of feed for various animals appears to result from a misunderstanding. Our analysis of the Wagon Wheel test, based on experience with many previous tests, predicts minimal contamination of animal feeds. Thus, no special precautions or procedures with regard to feeds or milk use are expected. Our environmental impact statement indicates, however, that even though no remedial action is expected to be needed as a result of flaring operations or seepage, there are measures available which could reduce exposures due to any unexpected releases.

We appreciate receiving your views on the Wagon Wheel project. Please be assured that before the Wagon Wheel project goes forward, there will be ample opportunity for you to express your views and for them to be taken into account.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert J. Catlin", is positioned above the typed name.

Robert J. Catlin, Director
Division of Environmental Affairs

Enclosure:
Wagon Wheel Environment Statement

April 16, 1972

Mr. Robert J. Catlin, Director
Division of Environmental Affairs
Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Catlin:

Thank you for your letter to me of April 7, 1972.

I am very much aware of the Draft Environmental Statement which was authored by the AEC. So is everyone else in Sublette County, Wyoming.

In my opinion, (and I have distinguished, scientific company) it is a poorly documented and inadequately researched document.

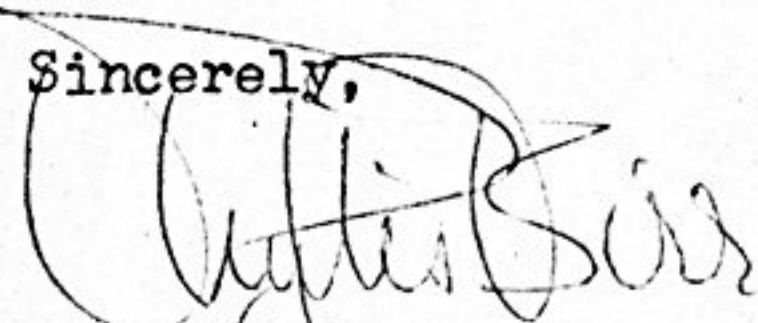
I am enclosing for your review, a copy of comments published by our Committee concerning the draft environmental statement.

I received a letter from Senator Edward Kennedy, in which he enclosed a letter from Mr. Julius Rubin of your Committee, who wrote in reply to an inquiry from Senator Kennedy. Mr. Rubin also referred to my inquiry as a "misunderstanding" as you do in your letter to me. It is no misunderstanding that has prompted concern in Sublette County, but a flagrant disregard for life on the part of your Committee and the El Paso Natural Gas Company.

I would like to comment at this time, that the AEC hearings which were recently held in Meeker, and Denver, Colorado, represented a total disregard for the very people who pay for your activities, and are in bleak contrast to the rights assured the Citizens of the United States in the Constitution. Your "we set the rules and you play by them" attitude at these hearings, is a ludicrous example of freedom of speech. Apparently you feel, in your Agency, that people will be placated by having had a "hearing". I would like to see some real hearings concerning your experimental detonations, in which your agency would not be in control.

cc: President Richard Nixon
Senator Edward Kennedy
Senator Clifford Hansen
Enclosure

Sincerely,


Phyllis Rirr
Wagon Wheel Information Committee
Pinedale, Wyoming

EDWARD M. KENNEDY.
MASSACHUSETTS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

April 13, 1972

Mrs. Vincent Birr
P.O. Box 249
Pinedale, Wyoming 82941

Dear Mrs. Birr:

This is in further reference to your letter regarding adverse impacts on the environment as a result of the proposed Project Wagon Wheel.

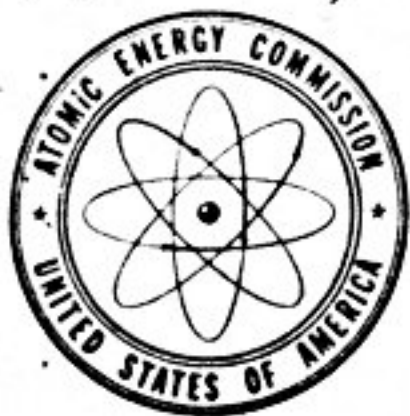
In response to my inquiry to the Atomic Energy Commission, I have now received the enclosed reply, which I hope will help clarify this matter.

I would suggest that you continue to make known your feelings to Senator Gale McGee and Senator Clifford P. Hansen regarding this matter. And, at the same time, I appreciate having the benefit of your thoughts.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Edward M. Kennedy
Edward M. Kennedy



UNITED STATES
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20545

APR 11 1972

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senate

Dear Senator Kennedy:

I am pleased to respond to your recent inquiry regarding the letter of March 5, 1972, from Mrs. Vincent Birr.

Mrs. Birr wrote a similar letter to President Nixon. That letter was referred to the Atomic Energy Commission for response and a copy of our reply is enclosed. The concerns expressed by Mrs. Birr regarding adverse impacts on the environment as a result of the proposed Project Wagon Wheel appear to be a result of a misunderstanding of information presented in the enclosed draft environmental statement.

In the interest of obtaining public views, the Atomic Energy Commission held public hearings and meetings in Colorado during March on the proposed Project Rio Blanco. Information meetings have been held in Wyoming on Project Wagon Wheel by El Paso Natural Gas and local groups in the past, and public hearings have been requested by Governor Hathaway, Senator Hansen, and Congressman Roncalio. The timing for such hearings is under consideration by the Atomic Energy Commission. The purpose of the public hearings, as well as the environmental impact statements, is to assure that adequate review is made on matters relating to the environment, as well as public health and safety.

Please let us know if we can be of further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Julius H. Rubin", is written over the typed name.

Julius H. Rubin
Assistant General Manager
for Environment and Safety

Enclosures:

1. Ltr, Catlin to Birr, dtd 4/7/72
2. Ltr, Birr to Kennedy, dtd 3/5/72

April 16, 1972

Senator Edward Kennedy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

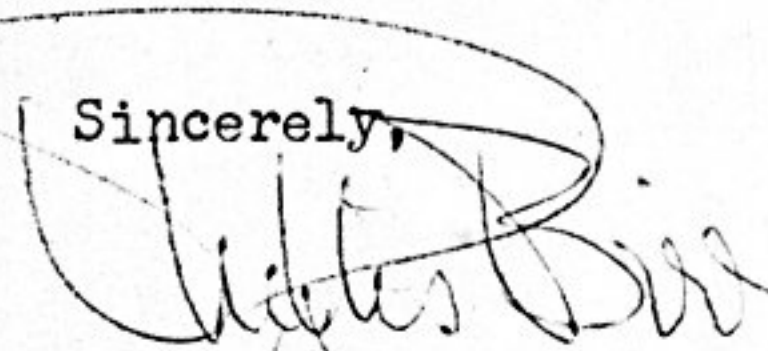
Dear Senator Kennedy:

Thank you for your letter of April 13, 1972, and for forwarding the letter sent to you by Mr. Julius H. Rubin of the Atomic Energy Commission, and the AEC Draft Environmental Statement.

Mr. Rubin's assumption that my letter was "a result of a misunderstanding of information presented in the enclosed draft environmental statement" could not be further from the truth. My understanding of the Draft Environmental Statement is quite concise. It is a poorly documented, and inadequately researched piece of fiction, with little regard for the people who dwell in the area, in which the AEC and EL Paso propose to carry out their joint experiment.

Our Committee of citizens from this County have prepared an article containing our opinion of the Draft Environmental Statement, which I enclose, along with a press release sent to the various news media last week. I suggest you read both of these, since it is apparent that the AEC is fond of referring to any comment made, concerning the credibility of their autonomous agency, as a "misunderstanding." We have contacted our Senators, among others, and you were contacted to make you aware, which you no doubt already were, of the wild abandon with which the AEC is raping the environment in the Rocky Mountain States.

Sincerely,



Phyllis Birr
Wagon Wheel Information Committee
Pinedale, Wyoming

cc: Congressman Teno Roncalio

Enclosures