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ROCK SPRINGS

WYOMING 82901

January 17, 1973

PAUL J. WATAHA
MAYOR

Honorable Clifford P. Hansen
United States Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Honorable Teno Roncalio
United States Congressman
Washington, D. C.

Dear Cliff and Teno:

At our regular meeting of the Rock Springs City Council held Monday night, I suggested to them that we take a position in connection with the Wagon Wheel Project on which you will hold hearings in the very near future. The Council adopted by unanimous motion my suggestion that we go on record of voicing our objections to the Project for the following reasons:

You are both aware of the fact that Rock Springs has experienced subsidence problems created by underground mine workings that possibly were improperly abandoned. In 1969 a specific area within the City began to sink causing a great deal of concern about other areas of the Community that are undermined. To our knowledge further subsidence in other City areas has not taken place and we certainly would not like to have something trigger further subsidence.

The City of Rock Springs is located approximately 75 miles from the Wagon Wheel site. We have information from a study entitled "Structural Response and Environmental Impact Evaluation, Project Wagon Wheel" that stated,

"The zone of influence (limit of perceptability) of the detonation ...consists of the area within a radius of 115 miles of SGZ". (SGZ is site of ground zero) p XIV--1"

"The abandoned coal mines underlying the City of Rock Springs, Wyoming, were discussed with the U. S. Bureau of Mines". p XIV--7

"Subsidence is occurring over several abandoned coal mines underlying the City of Rock Springs. An experimental stabilization project involving minefilling has been performed in a small part of the affected area. We understand efforts are presently being made to institute additional stabilization projects. We recommend that contact be initiated with officials to determine whether this additional filling will be accomplished prior to the event." p XIV--16"

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The studies indicate that the Rock Springs subsidence problem is recognized and they further indicate that they can give us no definite assurance that a blast with this magnitude would not cause further damage within the City. The conclusion of their report stated,

"It is our opinion that damage is unlikely in the mine workings comprised of relatively competent and intact rock. Most of the mines fall into this category. However, in the few mines where workings are comprised of heavily stressed and/or soft or fractured rock and which have a history of unstable conditions, it is possible that minor damage may occur. Such damage would probably be comprised of roof falls in underground mines and some sloughing and/or raveling of slopes in open pit mines. It is our opinion that this damage would be small in magnitude and easily repaired."
p XIV--12

Even though the mine subsidence is our prime consideration in objecting to the detonation of this blast, we also feel some allegiance and concern for our neighbors in Sublette County, particularly Pinedale. It is my understanding that these people in addition to possible surface damage could have their water supplies contaminated or destroyed, as well as general living conditions.

It is quite possible that such a blast could affect the Town of Green River through partial destruction of the Fontenelle Dam, which is known to have had leaks and cracks.

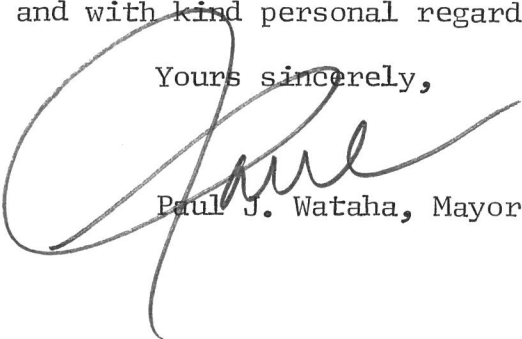
Our prime concern is to oppose any activity that could disturb or destroy the above-ground properties and natural resources on which the population of our area must depend.

We, therefore, unanimously agree that said Project should not take place until definite factual information can be presented to guarantee the public against anticipated damage.

I would appreciate it very much if the two of you would introduce this letter as a formal part of the minutes at the hearing.

Thank you for your help and with kind personal regards, I remain

Yours sincerely,



Paul J. Wataha, Mayor

PJW:jmn