

Wagon Wheel

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WESTERN INTERSTATE NUCLEAR BOARD

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DR. ALFRED T. WHATLEY
Executive Director

March 30, 1973

The Honorable Teno Roncalio
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Representative Roncalio:

It was most interesting to meet with you in Washington last week and have an opportunity to discuss your concerns over Project Wagonwheel and the nuclear stimulation of natural gas project as a whole. As you are aware, I share many of your concerns when we talk of the full-field stimulation project, but I do feel that the preceding experiments can be of value, not only to the technical community, but also to the citizens of the area who will have an opportunity to experience on a small scale that which they may later be asked to experience on a much larger scale.

There are two points about the effect of projects such as Wagonwheel which I would like to bring to your attention for your consideration. First, Plowshare, or nuclear explosives, if you will, is just a tool. Like any tool, in order to evaluate its potential and whether it should be used or not, one needs to know what the tool can do, and that you have the best tool. Then it should be possible to give an honest evaluation of its effects, and to be sure that these effects are as minimal as possible. It is with this thought in mind that I supported the Project Rio Blanco here in Colorado as a member of Governor Love's Committee. We recommend strongly that only the first phase be approved, and any further use of nuclear devices would have to have full public hearings, environmental statements, and complete opportunity for public participation in the decision making process.

The Hon. Teno Roncalio

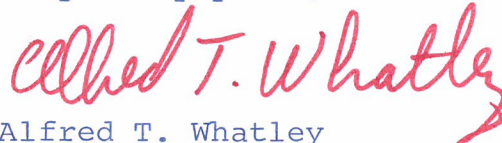
Page 2

March 30, 1973

The second point that I personally worry about is that with the energy problem or crisis, if you will, getting the attention that is now there, and with the fact that at least over the short term, the problem is real and will be extremely difficult to deal with, I am afraid that there may be a demand for nuclear stimulated natural gas whether we here in the west wish to have it produced or not. Since most of this gas is under federal lands, I think that it is fairly clear that the federal government can proceed with these programs if they so desire. Should this happen, I would feel better knowing that the best technology and the best designed devices will be used, rather than something which must be hastily pulled together, taken from stockpile, or which is not properly designed to do the job. I realize this may be a somewhat hokey argument but as I look into my very cloudy crystal ball I can see the possibility of such things happening.

I hope these thoughts will be of interest to you and thank you again for your time and for the opportunity to chat with you. My wife, Anneke, also sends her regards and says she really enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these problems.

Very truly yours,



Alfred T. Whatley
Executive Director

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