

October 28, 2015

Governor Matt Mead
State Capitol
200 West 24th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0010

RE: Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance Comments on Phase II of Wyoming's Energy Strategy

Dear Governor Mead,
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Phase II of Wyoming's Energy Strategy.

Since 1979, the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance (Alliance) has worked to protect the wildlife, wild places, and community character of Jackson Hole.

We greatly appreciated the opportunity to partner with your office in co-hosting a public meeting in Jackson regarding Phase II of Wyoming's energy strategy. Your staff were professional, a pleasure to work with, and ran an efficient and effective meeting. We would welcome the opportunity to partner with your office on similar public meetings in the future.

We also appreciate your position that Wyoming can have both a clean environment and a healthy economy, we strongly agree.

Here's the thing, the purpose of energy development is to improve our quality of life, yet right now, our state's addiction to fossil fuels is putting our way of life at risk. The science is settled: climate change is happening, we are causing it from our burning of fossil fuels, and it is already having consequences like less snow and more rain in the Tetons, persistent and worsening drought across Wyoming, and strange and increasingly severe weather across the globe.

We have a moral obligation to our children to protect them – that means preparing for and tackling climate change now. This means breaking our addiction to fossil fuels. Yet right now, Wyoming's energy strategy doesn't even mention climate change and doubles down on our fossil fuel dependence.

We recognize the important role that fossil fuels play in Wyoming's economy and that tax revenues from coal and other fossil fuels pay for approximately 70 percent of operating state government. We also recognize that coal is a dying industry and we have a responsibility as a state to plan for the future. More than 40 U.S. coal companies have filed for bankruptcy in the past few years, including industry giant Alpha Natural Resources. Because of countries around the world moving beyond coal in attempts to reduce air pollution, low prices for natural gas, and increasing competition from

renewable energy sources, the private sector is turning away from coal and stock prices of coal companies are cratering. It's irresponsible to tie our state's economic future to a dying industry.

It's time to embrace a new energy trajectory in the Cowboy State.

Research from Stanford University demonstrates that Wyoming could transition to using 100 percent clean and renewable energy for all purposes (electricity, transportation, heating/cooling and industry) by 2050 through investments like wind turbines on ranches, solar panels on roofs, and efficiency improvements in buildings. These investments in locally distributed renewable energy and energy efficiency would create 23,000 good-paying jobs and save every Wyomingite more than \$1,000 in energy costs every year while building stronger communities and a more stable climate. This is what a clean environment and healthy economy looks like.

Through clean energy investments in our communities Wyoming can take charge of our energy future, provide our citizens with energy security, make our energy even more affordable, protect our environment and our climate, and drive our state's economy forward into the future.

It's time Wyoming stopped clinging desperately to the dirty energy economy of the past and started leading the charge toward the clean energy economy of the future.

Let's use our innovation and ingenuity to show America how to produce clean and renewable energy, create new jobs and leave a positive legacy for the next generation of Wyomingites.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on Phase II of Wyoming's Energy Strategy. We look forward to working with you moving forward,



Craig M. Benjamin
Executive Director