

Mr. Alan Edwards, Deputy Director
Department of Environmental Quality
200 W 17th St
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

April 8, 2020

Mr. Edwards,

I am Joan Tellez from Sheridan, Wyoming and I am a partner in the family farm at 25 Monarch Road, Ranchester, Wyoming. I have many concerns about the ever changing plans of Ramaco's Brook Mine. Information written in the permit request may not be what will actually happen with Ramaco's plan as they proceed due to their behavior and past history.

I am sharing a summary of interactions and concerns I am aware of with Ramaco:

- Ramaco made big promises of employing 3,000-3,500 people in the mine and research center in 2015. This company has not been very transparent to the landowners or the public. How does Sheridan County benefit from this new mine?
- Because most of the mining is to be done underground, that will produce a much lower severance tax rate.
- If surface mining does occur there will be very little tax revenue because of the small amount of production.
- The price of coal will be reduced since most of the coal will be sold to Ramaco and there will be a very low severance tax collection. Charlie Atkins made the announcement in 2017 that they only need totes of coal for research.
- Being as the coal is privately owned, there will not be any collected in federal mine royalties like those received from the Powder River Basin mines.
- If this mine does develop, there won't be a need for many employees because of the automation.

- Ramaco has no idea who will work at the mine, employees or contractors. The mine plan states “RAMACO will either directly hire personnel for the movement of overburden, or will hire an independent contractor who will operate under a license to mine.”
- They have no customers in need of coal.
- If they do get customers, where will they load the coal, will it be trucked or will they need the railroad?
- What arrangements have been made to maintain the highways and county roads? In 2017 there was no plan.
- What safety measures are planned for the trucks hauling coal on these roads? There are older residents and slow moving agricultural equipment who use the roads daily.
- Why should we sacrifice our water, agriculture, walk in areas, and recreation for speculation of a few jobs?
- This company has failed to produce what it has proposed including the iCam facility which they told the Minerals Committee during the legislative session a year ago that it would be ready last February or March of 2019. It still is not ready.
- This company looks for government funding and grants, taking dollars not adding, especially to the Sheridan economy.
- With the amount of estimated usage of water how will that affect the aquifers with long-term mining? Over one hundred wells in the area could be impacted.
- What about the blasting and damage to the foundations and domestic wells and stock wells of landowners? Where does the burden of proof lie?
- The mine ‘s proposal of using surface water rights would need the approval of the Wyoming State Engineer. I don’t believe the permit has any details about how this will be done or what alternative methods might be used. If surface water is not permitted, they would need to use more groundwater which would impact the wells. Their estimate was 300,000 gallons of use per day.

- An average household uses about 144 gallons per day.
- How will this alluvial valley be protected?
- During a meeting in 2017 when they requested a zoning change, the idea of changing roads was mentioned. Have the county commissioners or state been approached with this future plan? Who will be notified and who will be the ones approving this process? (MP-7)
- What land disturbances will impact the wetlands and lands reducing habitats for wildlife, birds, recreation, and agriculture?
- There are two Sheridan County Walk in areas providing hunting and recreation within the permit which will become unavailable to the public. How will that happen and what process allows for closing those areas?
- The Kleenburn Recreation Area adjacent to the boundary is well used for boating and fishing along Tongue River and Goose Creek how will people recreating be impacted?
- The permit incorrectly states that the area around Ramaco and Acme are designated or zoned as heavy industry. This is not true! There are two small areas with light industrial zoning but most of the area is zoned agricultural. Once again it appears that Ramaco is trying to distort the truth and rewrite history.

This is why the landowners wanted to meet with Ramaco or the DEQ in 2015-2016, but were denied an informal hearing. RAMACO claims to be a good neighbor but the actions don't prove it. This valley has helped everyone if any landowner ever needed help. This is a different kind of neighbor. Since the landowners were denied an informal hearing, there have been happenings that never happened before, such as harassing calls, unexpected visitors in the wee hours of the morning, things missing from mailboxes, rabbits were poisoned, trespassing and the list goes on. Although I am not accusing Ramaco, but some of

their associates are suspect. These things just started happening after the denial of the meeting. Because of the denial a contested hearing was held with landowners, Big Horn Coal, Ramaco lawyers, WWC, the local DEQ and two well known experts, one in subsidence and one hydrologist. A closer look at the last permit application showed inadequacies and it was sent back for revisions. This application still has some missing information. It seems there is a huge hurry to complete the process at any cost to the landowners and public participants without any regard from Ramaco to do it right.

I am including links that you might be interested in looking at regarding Ramaco and how it worked with the land and landowners in Pennsylvania. This shows the lack of respect they have for the people or the land and environment. This is similar to what is happening in Sheridan County.

<https://www.rt.com/usa/166600-big-coal-treatens-small-towns>
Residents leery of reopening Western Pennsylvania mine

<https://wwwmanufacturing.net/operations/news>

May 9, 2019

Protectors of Mingo stall Mine Permit for Six Years

Sarah Martik
Mining

<https://www.coalfieldjustice.org/blog/2019/5/28/protectors-of-mingo-stall-mine-permit-for-six-years>

<https://messengerpaper.com/index.php/news-2/localnews/7592-ramaco-deep-mine-waiting-dep-approval>

Lastly, I am asking for an informal hearing for the landowners and the public. These issues need to be addressed by DEQ in a formal hearing.

Thank you,

Joan Tellez

Sheridan, Wyoming

CC: : Matt Van Wormer, DEQ Attorney General
Todd Parfitt, Director, DEQ
Jill Morrison, Executive Director PRBRC
Sheridan County Commissioners