

Case 12795

Ken Stanley
Subject:

Gas wells along the Animas River

Dear Lori Wortenberg,

My wife and I are schoolteachers (along with our two children) living near the Animas River at Cedar Hill, N.Mexico, about nine miles north of Aztec. We are very concerned with the potential environmental impact from the recent and future downspacing of gas wells.

Our river community has been impacted in years past from methane migrating through porous alluvial soil taking the path of least resistance into water wells, agricultural land, or into the river itself. Some landowners have settled through litigation, but the Animas River and riparian ecosystems cannot defend itself.

How can the oil & gas industry be allowed many exemptions from hazardous waste and drill in our backyards or along the banks of a fragile river? We desperately need state and federal legislation passed establishing no-drill buffer zones along America's rivers. The affluent from leaking wells or accidental chemical spills (some wells are literally on the banks of the Animas) leave little or no response time. A conflict of resources exists. Oil and gas should never have priority over our precious water. With four billion cubic feet of gas being produced daily in the San Juan Basin our "community share" of the economic resources is small in comparison to our "disproportionate share" of the spillover costs.

While Oil and Gas CEO's and stockholders enjoy the quiet and privacy of their posh gated communities, we see the continued depletion and deprivation of irrigated farmland, the damage to river ecosystems and hear the unnerving relentless sound of compressors. We have the technology, but not the political will, to establish a no-drill buffer zone at least a half mile away from either side of our rivers. We have had to absorb the spill-over costs from "government subsidized" coal seam wells, why not subsidize a "Riparian protection zone". The every day citizens living in the river valleys of the San Juan Basin deserve to be "equal partners" at the negotiating table. Government should not exist as a private club for lobbyist representing the corporate elite.

**Sincerely,
Ken Stanley**

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