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April 15, 2007

Kniffy Hamilton, Supervisor  
Bridger-Teton National Forest  
P.O. Box 1888  
Jackson, WY 83001

Dear Supervisor Hamilton:

The Wyoming Division of Travel and Tourism, as part of the State of Wyoming Cooperating Agency, appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the proposal to allow test gas wells in the Hoback Basin of the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

The Tourism Board is a strong advocate of multiple use on our public lands and, individually and collectively, we have been supportive of the reasonable development of Wyoming's natural resources. We have watched with growing interest and a degree of alarm the pace of development statewide in recent months with particular interest in Sublette and Sweetwater counties.

As an integral part of the Bridger-Teton National Forest, the Wyoming Range provides a spectacular backdrop for incomparable recreational and tourism opportunities. Research conducted by the Division of Tourism documents the top five reasons people visit Wyoming are mountains, the opportunity to view wildlife not found at home, wilderness, lakes and rivers and the natural environment. The Wyoming Range and the Bridger-Teton National Forest could be the poster children for these results. As a result recreation and tourism account for 6,190 jobs in Teton County and 1,200 more in Sublette and Lincoln counties, \$163.4 million in visitor spending in Teton and an additional \$25 million in Sublette and Lincoln counties plus \$15.1 million in states sales tax in Teton and \$1.8 more in Sublette and Lincoln. These are 2005 numbers, and the 2006 figures, expected this month, will undoubtedly reflect increases on all fronts. The point is the area is a key player in the overall Wyoming tourism/recreation industry.

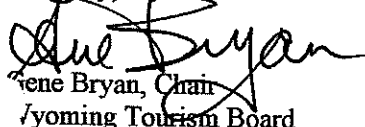
Wyoming and the nation need to continue to develop our energy resources, but at the same time it is equally imperative to protect and preserve the attributes that bring more than 7 million money-spending visitors to Wyoming annually. There are some places which should be spared from development, and we join the growing number of individuals and organizations who believe that the Wyoming Range should be one such area.

The Wyoming Tourism Board strongly opposes the proposal to allow three test wells in the Hoback Basin with the attendant road development. We are concerned if these wells are successful, full-field development would follow, and the impacts on wildlife, wildlife habitat, air and water quality and viewsheds are simply unacceptable. It is our belief that the level of natural gas development already under way and already permitted throughout Wyoming is sufficient to meet our country's natural gas needs for the foreseeable future.

We strongly urge you to leave the Wyoming Range as a sanctuary from energy development and as a bastion for wildlife, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Gene Bryan, Chair  
Wyoming Tourism Board

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