



## WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5400 Bishop Blvd. Cheyenne, WY 82006

Phone: (307) 777-4600 Fax: (307) 777-4610

Web site: <http://gf.state.wy.us>

**GOVERNOR**  
DAVE FREUDENTHAL

**DIRECTOR**  
TERRY CLEVELAND

**COMMISSIONERS**  
BILL WILLIAMS, DVM – President  
JERRY GALLES – Vice President  
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CLIFFORD KIRK  
FRED LINDZEY  
RON LOVERCHECK  
ED MIGNERY

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*Reply to:*

Bill Williams, DVM  
Wyoming Game and Fish Commissioner  
PO Box 1191  
Thermopolis, WY 82443  
Phone (307) 864-3043 - Fax (307) 864-4299

May 23, 2007

Sent via fax: 202 720 0632

Mark Rey, Undersecretary  
Natural Resources and Environment  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Undersecretary Rey:

Thank you for taking the time to visit Wyoming and learn about the vast array of the state's natural resources, both below and above the ground. We think that you will be impressed with our state's incredible natural beauty, its wildlife and fisheries resources and its role as the nation's leading energy producer.

As Game and Fish Commissioners tasked with conserving wildlife and fisheries resources and serving people, we believe that being good stewards of the land requires a knowledge of not only what is at our feet for today, but a vision for tomorrow and future generations. This means developing multiple use resources when necessary for the good of the nation, but also conserving natural beauty and our diverse wildlife heritage for future generations.

We fully support responsible oil and gas development in Wyoming, but we also believe there are certainly places in Wyoming where this kind of development does not mesh well with other interests and resources. With three subspecies of native cutthroat trout, outstanding moose, mule deer and elk herds, and virtually limitless recreational opportunities for our nation's hard-working people, the Wyoming Range is such a place.

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In recent months, 24 hunting and fishing groups have come together to voice their support for special federal legislation that would conserve the Wyoming Range's abundant wildlife and fisheries heritage. These groups represent thousands of people who have hunted and fished and otherwise used the Wyoming Range for generations. The Sportsmen for the Wyoming Range offer a well-thought-out plan that has two important parts: 1) allow current undeveloped oil and gas leases in the range an opportunity to be sold or donated and subsequently retired; and, 2) curtail any new and future oil and gas leasing.

As you know, our Governor, the Honorable Dave Freudenthal, has also expressed strong support for such legislation. We, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, endorse this plan as well and urge you to suspend the Environmental Impact Statement currently being crafted by the U.S. Forest Service for three exploratory gas wells in the Hoback Basin on the range's northeastern end. Finally, we ask that you request that BLM cancel all Wyoming Range lease parcels offered in four sales from December 2005 to August 2006. Obviously the agency should refund bonus payments and other appropriate costs incurred by the energy companies. We believe that all entities involved in the Wyoming Range need to step back and consider this important mountain range and its natural resource treasures more carefully.

We respectfully urge you to support this nation's sportsmen and women by helping us conserve the Wyoming Range for this generation and for those that will follow.

Sincerely,



Bill Williams, President  
Wyoming Game and Fish Commission