

I have attached to this statement copies of a land restoration agreement which was consummated April 16, 1965, between Surface Coal Mine Operators and the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. This agreement covers over 95 percent of the coal lands that were mined as far back as 1940.

It is difficult for me to envision legislation that is retroactive or that will blanket all operations. Some lands will cost only a few dollars per acre to restore while others might cost \$1,200.

With the assistance of my State agencies, which are soil conservation, water pollution, bureau of mines, game, fish and parks, coal mine inspection, forest service, and the Colorado State University, we can get this job done better than some bureau in Washington, D.C. My big-game biologists inform me that this program is doubling the carrying capacity of this land compared to the surrounding terrain.

My State has another project which is being conducted at Colorado State University. It is a 4-year program jointly funded by the mining industrial board, State forester, game, fish, and parks department, and the university are to develop restoration programs for Colorado mine dumps and mill tailing ponds. The most current conservation action that comes to my mind is a mining operation that will be in production within the next 5 years. After I had many long hours of discussion with their design engineers, the company increased their construction costs \$12 million to assure the protection of the esthetics and wildlife of this area.

In fact, in addition to my prepared statement, Mr. Chairman, Colorado looks on the sand and gravel operations as a fertile area for future potential. Where there is water available, we are hopeful that some of these areas can be developed into park and recreation areas. Where there is not water available, these are attractive sites for solid waste disposal.

The attachment I referred to earlier in my statement that is an agreement with the coal companies was looked upon by the State of Montana favorably and they incorporated these thoughts in a recent law passed by their legislature.

Colorado and many of the States need experience in these new programs that have been initiated in many of the States in the West. We need that experience due to the difference in the altitudes and climates that we experience within our State boundaries.

With this, Mr. Chairman, I apologize for having taken the committee's time today, but I hope my statement will point up some of the problems these proposals are creating for the affected States.

Senator BURDICK. Thank you for your contribution.

Does the State of Colorado have a conservation act?

Mr. ECKLES. We do not have a Colorado law covering specifically surface mining, but with the agreement I referred to, and which is attached to my statement, I feel invaluable experience and information will be derived from this agreement.

Senator BURDICK. These agreements are voluntary, they do not have the force of statute?

Mr. ECKLES. Not directly, but in my field there are many Colorado laws whether it be mine safety, water pollution, degradation, we have those types of laws.