

versity of Wyoming the sum of \$25,000 to conduct a 5-year research project on the revegetation problem. Other companies experimented with various types of reclamation practices. In our efforts we found the great majority of our surface mine operators to be cooperative and willing to conduct surface mine reclamation on a voluntary basis. To us, this indicated that our reclamation problem could be solved readily on a State basis and we have been proceeding along this line.

When the Honorable Clifford P. Hansen, a Member of your Committee, was Governor of Wyoming, we conferred with him relative to our views on this problem. He was aware of our efforts and gave encouragement to us. In a similar way, we have cooperated with Governor Stanley K. Hathaway. It is contemplated that legislation will be adopted by our Legislature which will be adapted to Wyoming problems and conditions. We are confident that our State Government, our University, and our industry have the competence to handle our surface mining problems.

It is our understanding that a number of States have adopted surface mine regulations. Others are preparing to do the same. It does not appear that Federal regulation, as proposed in S. 3132, is required. We recommend that the States be given an opportunity to develop programs which will meet their problems and conditions.

Of special concern to us is the desire to establish nationwide standards for reclamation practices. It is our belief that such an approach lacks the flexibility to meet the many conditions that will be encountered. The widely varied conditions within our own State indicate the need for flexibility within our own boundaries. This situation is even more difficult when comparisons are made with the Middle West or with the East. Further, the type of mineral being mined creates its own special problems. This wide variation and multiplicity of reclamation problems and practices is a strong argument in favor of State control as opposed to nationwide Federal control and standards.

It has been suggested that States with similar problems, such as our semi-arid Rocky Mountain States, be given the opportunity to cooperate in solving the problems peculiar to the Region and in establishing regulatory standards for the Region. We favor such an approach to the surface mining problem.

In conclusion, may we emphasize our belief that the efforts of the States, the mining industry and other interested parties, can provide the leadership required to bring about surface mine reclamation practices in all mine operations. We urge that your Committee defer action on S. 3132 and similar proposals so that further study may be given to placing a greater degree of responsibility and authority with the States for the development of programs, standards and regulations relating to surface mining activities.

STATEMENT OF THE NEW MEXICO MINING ASSOCIATION

The New Mexico Mining Association is opposed to S. 3132 and similar legislation and respectfully urges the Senate Interior Committee to consider these points:

1. This legislation obviously is intended to deal with a specific problem affecting a limited geographical area. The net effect, however, is to apply a national solution to an essentially local problem. As often happens in such cases, some of the proposed legislation makes allegations and provides regulation which—probably inadvertently—will create more problems than solutions.

2. We do not deny that in some parts of the United States certain problems may exist. These problems do not now exist in New Mexico, however, and it is unlikely that they ever will exist to any large degree. Should difficulties connected with surface mining arise within the state in the future, we believe appropriate state agencies already are aware of the potential problems and are prepared to take such action as may be desirable. Such action would, beyond doubt, supply more effective solutions to specific local problems than any regulation enacted at the federal level or forced upon the state by a federal agency.

3. The allegations contained in S. 3126, Sec. 2, amount to a declaration by the Congress that surface mining is generally reprehensible. These are both unfair and inaccurate. To the charges that this mining "destroys natural beauty," "damages the terrain for an indefinite period," and "adversely affects commercial and industrial development", we would point out that the largest mining operation in the state actually has added to the interest and beauty of the area