and has been a major tourist attraction. Surface mining in New Mexico, far from adversely affecting commercial and industrial development, has been the basis on which the economies of entire areas have rested.

4. The surface mining carried out in New Mexico to date consists mostly of metal mining from low grade ore deposits which cannot be mined economically any other way. The largest of these mines is more than fifty years old and probably will be mined for many more years to come. Typically, these deposits have long lives and quite often the estimated life span of these mines increases as the ore body is studied and as technology improves. Secondary recovery of minerals from waste dumps is a common practice and can be expected to increase in coming years.

5. In a survey made two years ago, the State Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources determined that in the strip and surface mined areas in New Mexico, which included waste dumps from such operations, the land involved comprised between 6,000 and 7,000 acres. This acreage is less than .01 of one per cent of the state's total land area. This, an all-time total, is of a magnitude little, if any, more than that of the virgin land which is disturbed annually in normal urban development. In New Mexico and similar western states, much of this land is only sparsely covered by vegetation and some of this is of a type which conservationists have considered predatory growth.

6. The allegation is made that surface mining also contributes to water pollution. Where such problems have existed in New Mexico, prompt action has been taken by the operators of the properties involved to prevent damage. In addition, federal and state legislation dealing with water pollution already is on the books. New Mexico mine operators also have taken action to prevent soil erosion and, working in cooperation with federal and state agencies, have been conducting experiments in planting on waste and tailings disposal areas.

It is our opinion that nationwide standards and regulations governing surface mining are inadvisable unless they adequately take into account the conditions existing in New Mexico regarding climate, topsoil, population density, land value, and ultimate potential use of reclaimed lands. We submit that such regulation is better left to the states to enact at such time as it may be needed.

We would like to add, also, that we who operate mining properties in New Mexico are jealous of our state's natural beauty and many of us have taken jobs here with the intention of spending our lives in these mining areas. We believe that we have a greater stake in preserving a good living environment than anyone from another area who may, or may not, visit our region in their lifetimes.

Statement of the Utah Mining Association

The Utah Mining Association, representing the major portion of the mining interests in the State of Utah, respectfully submits the following comments on S. 3132, which would provide for federal regulation of surface mining operations and the reclamation of surface mined areas.

Where mined land reclamation is a problem it should and can be handled on the state level. In Utah, for example, there is no strip mining; the only surface mining is by open pit. Notwithstanding the fact that the largest copper mine on the North American Continent is situated in Utah, the total land area disturbed by surface mining is less than 2/100 of 1% of the total land area of the state. In Utah, a much larger land area has been disturbed by the Interstate Highway System.

The Utah Mining Association opposes enactment of S. 3132 and pending related bills for the following reasons:

1. Utah and the several Western States are capable of regulating surface mining operations within their respective jurisdictions. All surface mining operations affect other surface values. The efficient regulation of surface mining requires practical accommodation of the various uses and values. The several states are intimately familiar with local conditions and are therefore in a better position to make a reasonable and appropriate balancing of interests among affected resources values. Even though S. 3132 recognizes that uniform national regulations are not feasible because of diversity of conditions in mining areas, the ultimate control would reside in the Secretary of Interior, and the bill would establish elaborate criteria for all state plans. The states would be required to conform with uniform legislative and administrative standards set by the Federal Government and the determination as to whether or not a state is proceeding