

**Press Statement**  
**Jeanie Alderson**  
**Release of the 2009 Update to Law and Order in the Oil and Gas Field – 2009**  
**Update**  
**May 21, 2009**

My name is Jeanie Alderson. I ranch with my family near Birney, Montana. I serve on the board of directors of Northern Plains Resource Council.

The report findings for the Miles City field office show the BLM fluctuating, but improving, in the number of environmental inspections conducted and in the number of high and low priority environmental inspections conducted.

The report shows the percentage of high and low priority environmental inspections conducted has been consistently low, but did increase significantly in fiscal year 2007.

While the 2007 increase does stand out, we still do not have confidence that our ranches and farms will be protected as coal bed methane development continues and grows in Montana.

To put the report into perspective it is important to understand the context of the split estate situation of many ranchers and landowners in the west. The split estate situation varies from state to state. In Montana, the federal government owns 60% of the methane; and roughly 90% of this federal methane sits under private farms and ranches. (“Your Land, Your Rights” NPRC)

For example, our ranch has been in our family for a very long time. We homesteaded in the late 1880’s. Five generations have worked this land – YET, three fourths of the minerals below our ranch are federal minerals that were reserved by the government after 1916. Today, these minerals are all leased by cbm companies.

As a split estate landowner facing coalbed methane drilling on my land, the findings in this report disturb me. Although there's been some improvement, I’m concerned about how well my land and family will be protected since the agency is unable to fulfill its responsibilities.