

**Teleconference on filing of the  
Oil and Gas Industry Responsibility Petition  
May 31, 2006**

**STATEMENT OF ERIC BARLOW  
Powder River Basin Resource Council**

Greetings. My name is Eric Barlow and I operate a family ranch in northeast Wyoming. On behalf of the Powder River Basin Resource Council and my neighbors Nancy Sorenson and Scott Crocket, whose declarations are available on the WORC web site, I am pleased to join these other folks in support of this petition.

The development of the mineral estate by an oil and gas operator is a privilege, and there are many responsibilities that accompany it. The Bureau of Land Management has the duty to oversee the development of the federal minerals and they are obligated to ensure it is done in the appropriate manner. There are two ingredients in ensuring the final reclamation and plugging of a well:

- 1) have appropriate planning and standards in place prior to development and
- 2) hold the operators accountable to perform their duties.

Unfortunately, the system is not working the way it should and we believe this petition is a reasonable and viable avenue to rectify a worsening situation.

Our ranch has had oil and gas development for over fifty years and we expect more, much more. Thus, I would like to share with you two views. One looks at the past development, and the other towards the future. The past is right in front of me. As I look out my window, I can see the legacy of unplugged and unrealized oil and gas wells. These wells have not produced in 10 to 20 years, and we have put in request upon request to the operators and BLM to get to it; and yet we wait.

The view forward is one of the 50,000 CBM wells and numerous more oil wells for our region, the Powder River Basin. Our ranch could see some 450 of these wells, and based on the history we have had, the status quo of planning for reclamation and the bonding levels required are completely unsatisfactory.

I have traveled, as did my father before me, to the local and state BLM offices, regional conferences, to DC, meeting with both the BLM and the Department of Interior and even to the halls of Congress, trying to get this issue addressed, for seven years. Yet, nothing is better -- the bonding is not better, the accountability is not better, the regulations are not better. But there are more permits, more wells and a mounting liability that is being ignored, covered over or just forgotten.

The BLM and the oil and gas industry are more than willing to work together to streamline the permitting process; it is time for them to take on the aftermath of reclaiming the land and plugging the wells with the same zeal.

The “buck” has and will continue getting passed on and the last one in line must not be the taxpayers and landowners.