

# WESTERN ORGANIZING REVIEW

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## Federal Court Halts Keystone XL Pipeline

In November, Judge Brian Morris may have delivered the final blow to TransCanada's Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, vacating the 2017 record of decision by President Trump to issue the Presidential Permit for the project. He ruled that the Department of State's analysis of critical issues fell short of a "hard look" and requires a further supplement to the 2014 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) in order to comply with its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

"This ruling is a victory for the rule of law, and it's a victory for common sense stewardship of the land and water upon which we all depend," said Dena Hoff, Glendive, Montana, farmer and member-leader of Northern Plains Resource Council. "Despite the best efforts of wealthy, multinational corporations and the powerful politicians who cynically do their bidding, we see that everyday people can still band together and successfully defend their rights."

The Court prohibits TransCanada from engaging in any activity in furtherance of the construction or operation of Keystone and associated facilities until the Department of State has completed a supplement to the 2014 Environmental Impact Statement that complies with



the requirements of the NEPA and Administrative Procedure Act (APA).

Judge Morris, specifically, ruled that the following issues have not been adequately considered:

- The effects of current oil prices on the viability of Keystone;
- The cumulative effects of greenhouse gas emissions from the Alberta Clipper tarsands oil pipeline expansion and Keystone; and
- An updated modeling of potential oil spills and recommended mitigation measures.

"We're thrilled with Judge Morris's ruling. In essence, this decision sends TransCanada back to the drawing board," said Northern Plains' chairwoman Becky Mitchell.

John Harter, Dakota Rural Action chairperson and South Dakota landowner who would have been crossed by this pipeline, agreed. "It's nice to have a federal

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# The View from WORC

By Beth Kaeding, WORC Chair

As 2018 comes to a close, it is a good time to look back and remember – and celebrate! – the things that we have accomplished. But the work is never done, and WORC will not slow its efforts.

WORC won its lawsuit against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on the inadequacy of its environmental impact statement for two Resource Management Plans it had issued in 2016. The judge sent the BLM back to the drawing board to prepare a new EIS. This time, BLM will have to include an alternative that considers leasing less coal, oil, and gas, as well as include an adequate climate analysis of leasing these federal resources.

WORC continues to stay involved in the bankruptcy proceedings of coal companies – this year it is Westmoreland. We want to ensure that companies don't try to dodge their obligations to reclaim strip mines, pay county government taxes that are owed, or reject collective bargaining agreements with workers.

We opposed the repeal of the Clean Power Plan and have continued to defend and demand implementation of standards to limit venting, flaring, and leaking of natural gas that both the BLM and EPA propose to weaken. We helped generate more than 400,000 comments against the BLM's proposed Methane Rule. We sent a dozen members to Denver to testify against the EPA's proposed changes to their Methane Rule.

WORC has also filed a lawsuit against the Trump Administration's efforts to help extractive industries avoid paying a fair value to Americans for the privilege of extracting taxpayer-owned coal, oil, and gas.

After much effort, a consensus Farm Bill is finally out of conference committee. We have high hopes the President will sign it before Congress adjourns. We continue to fight loopholes that allow foreign-owned meatpackers to import beef into the United States, run it through a U.S. inspection facility, and put a "Product of the USA" label on it.

And we can't forget the mid-term elections! WORC worked hard to ensure a high voter turnout in our region. Because Democrats have won back the House of Representatives, we hope to slow – even reverse – some of the regressive policies noted above.

Thanks for all that you do. WORC is more than just an organization; it is a network of like-minded citizens who support each other in our battles for justice and responsible stewardship of our land and natural resources. We work tirelessly to make our region and world a better place to live. It has been my honor to serve as your Chair this past year.



*Beth Kaeding*

## WESTERN ORGANIZING REVIEW

The *Western Organizing Review* is published quarterly by the Western Organization of Resource Councils.

WORC is a regional network of grassroots community organizations, which includes 15,190 members and 38 local chapters. WORC helps its member groups succeed by providing trainings and coordinating regional issue campaigns.

## WORC's NETWORK

*Dakota Resource Council  
Dakota Rural Action  
Idaho Organization of  
Resource Councils  
Northern Plains Resource Council  
Oregon Rural Action  
Powder River Basin Resource Council  
Western Colorado Alliance  
Western Native Voice*

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*“Pipeline” continued from page 1*

judge agree with the common sense analysis we’ve done,” he said. “Basically you just can’t reverse a decision [by a former president] based on environmental and scientific facts just because you feel like it.”

As county sheriffs have been running notices of eminent domain out to farmers and ranchers along the pipeline route, Northern Plains, Dakota Rural Action, and a host of tribal and community organizations have mobilized against the pipeline. They’ve fought hard in the face of a project that seemed almost unstoppable after the Trump Administration took power. “I was asked by a Keystone XL fieldman if I really wanted to take on a multi-billion dollar corporation,” recalls Don Brown, a Montana landowner whose ranch would have been crossed by the pipeline. “I took this to be a threat of condemnation where my constitutional right to protect my property was violated.”

The groups had planned to continue on-the-ground actions, including protests and building solar power stations along the path. The lawsuit brought by Northern Plains and others pointed out that the 2014 EIS that was used to determine the project’s impact underestimates its threat to the health of water, land, and communities. Since 2014, TransCanada’s other pipelines have experienced multiple accidents and spills. The pipeline would cross several major waterways, including the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers.

“It’s nearly as good a ruling as we could have hoped for – he decided in our favor on almost all of our claims,” Mitchell said. “Today, we saw the results of grassroots democracy in action, winning for water and people!”

“All Americans should be proud that our system of checks and balances can still function even in the face of enormous obstacles,” Hoff said.

## How can you support WORC in 2019?

In 2019 WORC will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary! We couldn't have done it without you.

Your support helps us to fight to defend standards protecting clean air, clean water, family farming and ranching, and public health.

You can help in the following ways:

1. Sign up to receive our action alerts, blog posts, WORCExpress and our newsletter, the *Western Organizing Review*.
2. Take Action! Participate in action alerts and share with your friends and family.
3. Donate! You can send a check to WORC, 220 S 27th Street, Suite B, Billings, MT 59101, or via our website.

To sign up to take action or donate visit our website at [www.worc.org](http://www.worc.org) and follow the links in the upper right corner.



***Help make our  
40th year another  
great year of  
grassroots leadership  
and action***

# Around the Region

## A look around WORC's network

### Dakota Resource Council

Badlands Area Resource Council is working diligently to keep an oil refinery from being built three miles from Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP).



DRC and its allies have appealed the North Dakota Department of Health's granting of Meridian's Air Permit to Construct. DRC's contesting the Public Service Commission's (PSC) decision to not require the Davis Refinery to go through the siting permit process.

On November 14, DRC members and staff attended an adjudicative hearing at the State Water Commission to challenge the Davis Refinery's water appropriation. A decision from Judge Dawson on the Davis Refinery's water appropriation permit should come sometime in December.

### Dakota Rural Action

The Black Hills Chapter along with their close ally Clean Water Alliance collaborated on a float for the 2018 Festival of Lights Parade on November 24. The theme of the float was Water is Life. The float was decorated with blue and white lights.

The music on the float was Marty Robbins song, Cool Water. BH Chapter Member Karen Ellison had



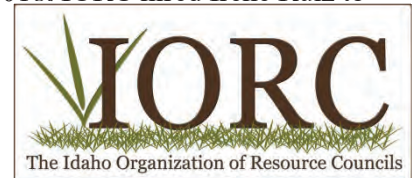
the windows down to shout out to the crowd, "Water is Life." Many called back with Water is life, Mni Wiconi or love your float. Karen said she was overwhelmed with the positive response of the public.

Black Hills Chapter members are working hard to get the news out about the potential gold mine at the headwaters of Rapid Creek. The chapter takes every opportunity to inform the public. The next big event with large outreach will be the Outdoor Expo in February.



### Idaho Organization of Resource Councils

A goal of IORC's five-year strategic plan is to have a multi-racial grassroots organization in the southwestern area of Idaho. Early in 2018, IORC hired Irene Ruiz to conduct an assessment of the possibility of a chapter in that area. Irene identified Canyon County as a good area to organize in. At 25 percent Latinx, the area has the highest Latinx population in the state of Idaho.



In June, Irene began one on ones with well-known Latinx community leaders. Three main issues were discussed at almost every meeting: housing, food inequity, and immigration. The Treasure Valley is one of the fastest growing areas in the nation and many are feeling the pinch of affordable housing. In areas where people can find housing, there are no full-service grocery stores or access to healthy food. Other issues in the area are water, air pollution, transportation, education, healthcare, poverty, and racism.

In 2019 we will have more news on the possibility of forming a new chapter in Canyon County. We are excited about the prospect of growing our grassroots power to represent a more diverse section of Idaho's people.

### Northern Plains Resource Council

Northern Plains Resource Council toured four cities in south-central Montana this past October with their *Montana's Clean Energy Future Roadshow*, with the goal to educate and inform the public about solutions that can save people money, conserve energy and fight climate change.

Rural communities have higher concentrations of low income households. As a result, these communities experience higher energy burdens. Programs like On-Bill

Financing exist to help rural communities make meaningful energy efficiency upgrades and overcome energy burden.



Northern Plains members with expertise in clean energy issues were featured speakers. Audience members included local elected officials and board members of electric co-ops.

A primary focus was to promote an innovative financing model called Commercial Property-Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE). C-PACE allows commercial, agricultural, and multifamily housing properties to receive 100% upfront financing for energy efficiency, water conservation and renewable energy upgrades. That financing is then paid back as an assessment on the properties' annual tax bill.

For more information about C-PACE, visit <https://northernplains.org/issues/clean-energy/>.

### Oregon Rural Action

In mid-October ORA held its annual meeting. The featured speaker was Dr. Bruce Thomson, a retired family physician and active member of Health Care for All Oregon. HCAO's mission is to bring equitable, affordable, comprehensive, high quality, publicly-funded health care to everyone in Oregon and the United States.

ORA members present at the annual meeting also elected Mitch Wolgamott, Bill Whitaker, Norm Cimon and Lacy Folden to the Board.



### Powder River Basin Resource Council

Wyoming is one step closer to ending self-bonding for coal mines. In September, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality's Land Quality Advisory Board approved a set of new standards to improve Wyoming's coal mine financial assurance requirements. The DEQ's



proposed rules will significantly limit the controversial practice of self-bonding by mining companies.

The DEQ's proposed rules: 1) limit self-bonding to

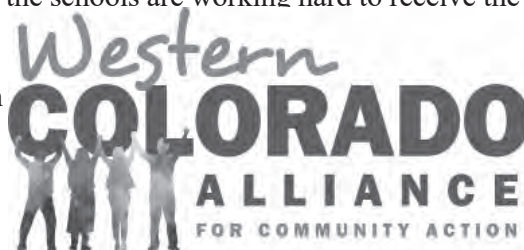
companies with strong credit ratings; 2) require self-bonds to be guaranteed by the parent company; and 3) limit self-bonding so no company can self-bond more than 75% of their reclamation amount.

Powder River is encouraging citizens to contact the Land Quality Advisory Board in favor of these new rules and offered supporting testimony.

### Western Colorado Alliance

Western Colorado Alliance's Western Slope Youth Voter Initiative has doubled to more than 30 high school students across three counties.

In Colorado, any high school that registers 85% or more of its senior class to vote becomes eligible to receive the Eliza Pickrell Routt Award from the Secretary of State. While all of the schools are working hard to receive the award, our team at Olathe High has already met this goal.



In a week-long push, coordinated with their teachers, students registered every eligible senior student. It's a phenomenal achievement, making Olathe High only the second school on the Western Slope to receive the award since the program began, and the first school in Western Colorado this year.

Western Colorado Alliance is also working on ways to make the ballot more accessible and less intimidating to first-time voters, with a reminder that in many communities, elections can come more than once a year.

### Western Native Voice

The 2018 midterm elections saw a major increase in Native American voter turnout, according to Montana Native Vote, Montana's only statewide voter advocacy group that works to inspire Indigenous action across Montana's Indian Country.

Voter turnout in reservation communities increased between the 2014 and the 2018 midterm elections from 40% to 59%, respectively.

Marci McLean, Executive Director for Montana Native Vote, attributes the increase in turnout to the year-round grassroots efforts in voter and civic education, as well as on-the-ground community organizing. Statewide voter turnout for the 2018 midterm election reached 69% with over 490,000 voters casting ballots, according to the Montana Secretary of State website.



# WORC Files Suit Against Trump Administration

**T**his August, the Trump Administration unlawfully created a committee designed to help energy companies avoid paying a fair return to American taxpayers for the privilege of extracting taxpayer-owned coal, oil, and gas.

WORC contends that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke stacked the Royalty Policy Committee (RPC) with representatives of energy extraction companies that stand to directly benefit from reduced payments for resource development, putting money that would go to education, hospitals, and other critical services into the pockets of energy companies.

WORC filed suit against the Trump Administration to comply with the law by ending secretive closed-door meetings and including more members from public interest groups on the committee.

“Ryan Zinke has concocted this sham committee to launder one-sided proposals from the coal, oil, and gas companies into federal policy,” said Montana state legislator and Northern Plains member Mary Ann Dunwell. “As a state legislator, it is my responsibility to make sure we collect all the revenue we need to fund schools, mental healthcare, and roads. States across the West are in budget crisis, and yet the federal government is entertaining proposals to shortchange state revenue further for the benefit of private industry.”

On September 13, roughly a month after the Administration's committee was created, Ryan Zinke's industry-stacked Royalty Policy Committee met in Denver, Colorado. WORC was there, represented by Western Colorado Alliance member Barbara Vasquez. WORC Chair Beth Kaeding sent out a letter outlining our call for transparency within the committee's decision-making, as well as concerns that the new Notification to Drill pilot program is simply a way to side-step public input on new projects that could affect the health and livelihood of rural communities.

Then, on November 29, WORC filed a motion for a preliminary injunction to stop the Royalty Policy Committee from conducting any further business until the Administration complies with federal transparency laws by giving notice of and opening the RPC's subcommittee meetings to the public, releasing the subcommittee's materials, including information pertaining to the conflicts of interest of appointed committee-members,



*Western Colorado Alliance member Barbara Vasquez speaking out to the Royalty Policy Committee in Denver, Colo.*

and fairly balancing the Committee to include representatives of the public interest.

Mark Fix, a rancher near Miles City, Mont., and member of WORC and Northern Plains, explained the filing this way:

“We are asking the court today to drag the Royalty Policy Committee's secret meetings and conflicts of interest out into the sunshine and bring some balance to the committee's membership. Landowners who deal with the impacts of mining or drilling deserve a seat at the table when federal mineral policy is crafted, but by appointing a one-sided committee, Secretary Zinke made clear he never intended that landowners participate.”

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# Record Turnout Changes Political Landscape

## Women and first-time candidates storm to victory in midterm elections

The 2018 midterm elections had some notable outcomes in our region and beyond. Record turnout both across the country and in our region, meant a number of popular policies passed via ballot measure, including Medicaid expansion in Idaho. Also, many women and first time candidates (often both) stormed to victory, ending the Republicans' eight-year control of the US House of Representatives. For the first time in history, more than 100 women will serve in the House, with the first Native American women representatives from Kansas and New Mexico.

Additionally, US Senator Jon Tester won his re-election campaign, securing his third term in the Senate. Most of the makeup of the state legislative chambers remained the same, with the exception of Colorado which changed the Senate to Democratic control, giving Democrats a trifecta of control in state government. In South Dakota, Dakota Rural Action member Billie Sutton lost his gubernatorial campaign to former Congresswoman Kristi Noem by only 3.4 points. Powder River Basin Resource Council member Eric Barlow won re-election to his fourth term as state House Representative in Wyoming. And, finally, North Dakota elected Representative Ruth Buffalo to the state legislature, ousting the author of the state's discriminatory voter ID law.

North Dakota's voter ID law was just one of the attempts at voter suppression seen across the country. The Supreme Court of the United States upheld the law aimed at making it more difficult for Native American voters to cast a ballot in North Dakota. North Dakota's state legislature initially passed a law in 2013 which has been under litigation ever since. The law requires a voter to have an ID with a residential address listed on it to be eligible to vote, which is a challenge for those living on reservations, many of whom don't have standard residential address and get mail delivered to a PO box, instead.

A federal district court in North Dakota agreed with challengers to the law, and blocked the Secretary of State from enforcing these requirements, thereby allowing voters to cast ballots in the primaries. But the Circuit Court of Appeals put the district court's order on hold. The challengers submitted an urgent request to the Supreme Court, and four weeks before Election Day, the court ruled to deny the request without explanation. An estimated 70,000 North Dakota residents were believed to lack the qualifying ID under the law's provisions. Another 18,000 residents were estimated to lack the supplemental documentation to permit them to vote without a qualifying ID. Despite this, there was a massive Get Out The Vote effort from nonprofit groups partnering with tribal governments, and voter turnout on reservation areas in North Dakota more than doubled from the last midterm elections in 2014.

Building on this momentum, expansion plans are already underway for Western Native Voice and Montana Native Vote to create a year round, issue-based advocacy and political organization in North Dakota to organize in Native communities in 2019 and beyond.



*DuWayne Red Water, Vaughn Three Legs, Wade Three Legs singers from Cannonball, North Dakota, on Standing Rock Reservation, helped encourage voter turnout in Native communities.*

# Wyoming Law Stimulates Local Food Opportunities

Thanks to legislation passed in 2015 and updated in 2017, the local food movement is blossoming in Wyoming. The Wyoming Food Freedom Act enables producers to sell directly to consumers and encourages “expansion of agricultural sales by farmers markets, ranches, farms and home-based producers.”

Frank Wallis, a volunteer store manager at Downtown Farmers Market, credits the law for helping to develop the loosely structured, cooperative store in Gillette. About 25 producers stock the small store with a range of products, including beef, lamb, pork, raw milk, honey, jellies, sauerkraut, pickles, eggs, breads, and many other goods. Once a month, customers line up for fresh donuts made in the store by members of the nearby Amish community.

Open year round, the two-year old store relies on the producers and volunteers to run the market. “In a traditional farmers' market, each farmer or food producer, would go out and stand there at their booth for the full market,” Wallis says. “But here, we’re doing it six days a week, seven hours a day. They don’t have time to milk the cows, or gather the eggs, or make the pies or make the barbecue sauce or anything like that. So we’re splitting that up, becoming agents for each other, and part of the co-op is we help each other through the marketing end of these businesses, too. That’s kind of a new step for this type of a business.”



The Food Freedom Act lets producers do “things with pretty much no regulation,” Wallis says. “We have to inform our customers that the products are not licensed, inspected, or registered with the state. We’re just free to do what we want. And that’s made a big difference.”

Allowing people to sell their goods has moved people from food hobbyist to professional or semi-professional food producer. The diversity of operations is a sign of a robust community of producers. “Some [producers] are very small, doing one product, maybe less than a hundred dollars a week,” Wallis says, “And then we have other producers here, the milk producer and some of the beef producers and some of the other longer-established people are doing five to six hundred, maybe even a little more on a good week. So that’s pretty impressive for getting started.”

The law has enabled local producers to expand their offerings and extend sales beyond the seasonal farmers’ markets. Communities such as Sheridan and Lander hold year-round farmers’ markets. The growing number of producers also drives demand for local foods. More outlets are selling local foods and home-made products. Joe Wesnitzer, owner of Papa Joe’s Produce in Sheridan, sells most of his lettuce left over from the Saturday farmers’ market to a small grocery store and a gas station with a deli. “They like to stock local food,” Wesnitzer says.

Producers can offer home-processed poultry, poultry products, rabbit and fish. Lamb, beef, pork and goat meat must come from a state or federally inspected facility.

Even with the Food Freedom Act’s reduced regulations, Wallis says that, to his knowledge, there has been no foodborne illness attributed to the home-made food. “That’s amazing that it’s really that safe,” he says. “And it’s really catching on, I think.”

# Coal Train Derailment Offers Lesson on Danger of Fossil Fuels

**A**t 11:30PM on the evening of Sept. 26, a coal train derailed just outside of downtown Columbus, Montana. Thirty-nine cars spilled 4,600 tons of coal, including some into the Yellowstone River. The destination of the coal is unknown, but could have been either of the coal-fired power plants in Boardman, Ore, or Centralia, Wash or an export terminal near Vancouver, British Columbia.

Recent years have seen proposals for several new coal export terminals along the west coast. Most of these proposed terminal projects have been abandoned. One proposed export facility remains: the Millennium Bulk Terminal, sited for Longview, Wash. The facility has been denied multiple permits from a variety of regulatory agencies, and has not succeeded in overturning those rulings. Each export terminal permit that's denied is a significant victory for towns along the route, as dozens more loaded coal trains won't roll through, threatening public health and safety, damaging local infrastructure, and negatively impacting property values.



*This wreck occurred less than an hour from WORC's main office in Billings. It's a reminder that while rail accidents are rare, they do happen. This crash was particularly sobering happening so close to homes and businesses, especially in light of the increase in volatile Bakken crude being shipped by rail. As bad as this wreck was, no one was injured.*

*By the time these photos were taken, railroad crews had moved the wrecked coal cars off the tracks to allow train traffic to resume. Cars were piled and stacked between the road berm and the tracks. A significant amount of coal remains on the ground. As open-top coal cars depart the Powder River Basin, coal dust is released along the route, despite efforts to mitigate its release. A single car can release between 500 pounds and one ton of coal dust during transport. Coal trains are typically built to a length of 125-150 cars, leading to the release of significant dust en route. Very fine dust is a health hazard because it can be breathed deep into the lungs of both adults and children without being filtered out, causing inflammation.*



*"Derailment" continued on page 11*

# The Making of a Disaster

## How fracking continues to undercut solutions to Pavillion's groundwater contamination

Sue Spencer, a hydrogeologist based in Laramie, Wyo looks down from a sandy bluff on a two-football-field-sized swath of cleared land that designates a capped natural gas well. Two men in unmarked blue coveralls and white hard-hats stand near the edge of the site. She has no idea whether this is one of the wells that's been contaminating the East Pavillion, Wyo water supply, or if it's just a well that's been under-performing. She has no way of knowing whether simply capping the well will stop methane from leaking into the groundwater aquifer, or not.

"The people that were there sampling wouldn't even speak to us," Spencer said. "There's this veil of secrecy about everything they do."

Secrecy comes standard in the oil and gas industry. It's enabled by state and federal policies that allow companies to hide details around hydraulic fracturing. For the residents of Pavillion, the culture of concealment around fracking makes a bad situation much worse.

"Back in 2013, Jeff Locker, a Pavillion-area farmer, showed up at our office in Laramie with three giant boxes full of documents and water quality data reports, and he wanted us to help him figure out what was going on with his well," Spencer said. "He'd been having problems with his well since 1992 [but] nobody was listening to him."

Locker, a Powder River Basin member, had his water tested in the late 1980's when he financed his ranch. The tests indicated he had high-quality water. Four years later, his water quality degraded by a factor of 10.

The degradation of water quality falls in line with a surge in gas development in the Pavillion gas field throughout the 1990's. Then, in the 2000's, the density of wells went from one well per 160 acres to four. Currently, the Pavillion gas field has 169 wells.

Those wells were drilled into the Wind River Formation, a complicated sequence of sandstones and channel deposits that are layered on top of each other. The formation is about 3,500 feet thick. Without an impermeable layer to stop gas migration between the gas production zone and the drinking water aquifers, gas wells need to be constructed in a way to protect shallow groundwater wells. Well casings must be filled with concrete down below the bottom of the deepest possible water supply. Any gaps between the casing and drill bore



allows gas to move freely up the open casing and out into the water-bearing layers, contaminating not only those layers, but all of the layers above as it makes its way to the surface.

According to a study done by the Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission on gas wells in the Pavillion area, 52% of the 169 wells have incomplete casings. Any number of those wells may be leaking methane into groundwater aquifers like the one the Locker family uses for drinking water. And without more complete scientific study, there's no way to tell how much contamination is happening.

A complicating factor came in 2011 when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a draft report that found benzene and other chemicals used in the fracking process in a 700-foot-deep freshwater aquifer far above gas-production depth. The draft report, which was never released as a final version, was the first documented evidence of fracking-related water contamination.

"The oil industry went nuts," Spencer said. "It was right as the gas boom was starting, and [the oil lobby] was just like, 'you can't say that groundwater was impacted by the fracking industry.'"

Amid the backlash, the EPA caved to pressure from Encana, the gas company that owns the wells,

and the state of Wyoming, allowing the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to take over the investigation. Under DEQ, the contamination investigation was reduced to a palatability study. No new monitoring wells have been drilled, and the state of Wyoming is pushing EPA to plug their two monitoring wells. Without more monitoring, the complicated hydrogeology of the Wind River Formation can't be fully understood, including the real cause of the contamination of Pavillion residents' drinking water.

"The science is just pathetic," Spencer said of the way DEQ has begun using samples from drinking water wells, instead of drilling scientific monitoring wells. "It just died at the mere mention of fracking, which isn't as much of the problem as these improperly constructed gas wells."

While not admitting that there's a problem, Encana has been delivering water to some of the affected farmers and ranchers. This duplicity shields them from having to find a real solution, such as simply drilling a new municipal water well a few miles outside of the gas field and pumping water in. This type of solution isn't unprecedented, nor is it particularly expensive in the scope of Wyoming water projects. Unfortunately, in the efforts to cover up the fracking contamination, Wyoming has enabled the industry to avoid fixing problems it's caused through bad practices, and left residents without clean water.

"As a geologist, it's really frustrating to see how it's played out" Spencer said. "It's clear to me that the reason that not much is happening here is political pressure. Everyone in Wyoming knows that groundwater is probably our most important resource. To let this go on for 10 or 15 years and these people still have no water except for a few bottles delivered once a week is just not right."



#### "Derailment" continued from page 9

*The dangers of transporting coal are well known: all coals have a propensity to self-heat and release methane gas. In fact, coal spilled during a 2017 coal train derailment near Noxon, Montana, began smoldering along the banks of the Clark Fork River a month after the crash. As climate change dries out western states, the chances that this could result in dangerous wildfires increase, even well after the time of the crash.*



*Rail cars were torn apart, even at the relatively slow speeds that trains are required to observe when they're rolling through towns. Thousands of tons of coal were dumped, including into the Yellowstone River. Mounds of coal are visible on the far side (the river-side) of the railroad berm. It could have been far worse. Had this been an oil train, the fireball from thirty-nine oil cars igniting may have incinerated many of the houses in the neighborhood as well as the retirement home at a time when residents would have been asleep. Even if the wreck didn't result in an inferno, 39 oil tanker cars can carry 1.4 million gallons of crude, and much of it would have ended up in the river.*

# WORC

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## PUBLICATIONS

**NOW IS THE TIME TO END SELF-BONDING** Makes the case for why Congress and states should act now to protect coal communities from picking up the bill for coal mine cleanup.

**TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE: THE RISKS OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN CARBON CAPTURE AND**

**SEQUESTRATION** Pulls back the curtain on the role that CCS is likely to play in reducing global greenhouse gas emissions and profiles the difficulties that companies have encountered in designing carbon capture plants

**NO TIME TO WASTE** Examines standards and disposal practices around radioactive oil and gas waste in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming

**UNDERMINED PROMISE II** Examines coal production in the West and find that mining companies and regulatory agencies are falling short on keeping promises made in the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act

**FLARING BOOM** Explains the underlying causes and the problems caused by flaring and venting methane from oil and gas fields in six western states

**WATERED DOWN: OIL AND GAS WASTE PRODUCTION AND OVERSIGHT IN THE WEST** Examines dangers to water quality from oil and gas production in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming

Download these publications at [www.worc.org](http://www.worc.org)

## 2019 EVENTS

DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL BOARD MEETING  
*Bismarck, ND.....January 19*

OREGON RURAL ACTION BOARD MEETING  
*La Grande, Oregon.....January 12*

POWDER RIVER BASIN RES. COUNCIL BOARD MEETING  
*Cheyenne, Wyoming.....January 25*

WESTERN COLORADO ALLIANCE BOARD MEETING  
*Grand Junction, Colorado.....January 25*

IDAHO ORGANIZATION OF RES. COUNCILS BOARD MEETING  
*Boise, Idaho.....January 26*

NORTHERN PLAINS RESOURCE COUNCIL BOARD MEETING  
*Billings, Montana .....February 16*

WORC Summer Conference  
*Bismarck, North Dakota .....June 10-12*

WORC Winter Board and Staff Meeting  
*Billings, Montana .....December 6-7*