



League of Women Voters of La Plata County, CO
League of Women Voters of Montezuma County, CO

February 24, 2010

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
USEPA Headquarters
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Mail Code 1101A
jackson.lisa@epa.gov
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson,

The League of Women Voters of southwestern Colorado is pleased to offer you a proposal to improve the cooperation and communication between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the citizens of the Four Corners for the benefit of air and water quality protection in our area.

You are probably aware that the League of Women Voters (LWV), a nonpartisan political organization of over 900 local Leagues, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Our local Leagues, the LWV of La Plata County in Durango and the LWV of Montezuma County in Cortez, have been actively involved in air quality management issues for several years. The Montezuma League has conducted an evaluation of the adequacy of air quality data in southwestern Colorado, which has resulted in a monitoring grant from the State of Colorado for ozone and particulate matter. The La Plata League, together with the Montezuma League were both active participants in the Four Corners Air Quality Task Force. The November 2007 final report contains options and ideas for mitigating air quality impacts and a recommendation which both our local Leagues along with others have been refining. We believe that the EPA regional delineation which disperses the Four Corners into three disparate and distant EPA regional jurisdictions has caused inconsistent oversight of the Clean Air and Clean Water Act goals and requirements in the Four Corners. This has resulted in inadequate protection of our air and water quality by Regions 6, 8 and 9 in performing the EPA mission and serving the public in the Four Corners area.

Development of oil, gas, and coal-bed methane has been steadily increasing along the northern edge of the San Juan geologic basin in southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico (EPA Region 8 and 6 territory). Many years of inadequate EPA Region 9 oversight and enforcement have contributed to a major air pollution source at the Four Corners Power Plant on Navajo lands. Since Global Energy and the Dine Power Authority propose another 1500 megawatt coal-fired power plant, the Desert Rock Energy Project, on Navajo lands just to the southeast of the Four Corners plant. We have concluded that consideration, in isolation, of each

new proposal in each jurisdiction (including Regions 6, 8 and 9) is no longer an effective way to maintain or improve Four Corners air quality or to keep air quality within attainment levels.

We are requesting that you approve the funding and establishment of a senior level person, based in the Four Corners area, but reporting directly to the USEPA in Washington D.C., who would work with you, your Assistant Administrators for Air, Radiation and Water, the regional EPA Air Division Directors and all other jurisdictions in the Four Corners to oversee a consistent proactive approach to Four Corners air and related water quality issues. Please see our proposal (Attachment 1) for streamlining EPA jurisdiction in the Four Corners region. Please also see our draft of a Position Description for the proposed EPA Four Corners air quality liaison (Attachment 2). We suggest that a broad recruitment open to all sources of applicants, and possibly utilizing Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) authority, would be appropriate to attract the strongest possible candidates.

Our proposal has been endorsed by the State League of Women Voters organizations of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah. We have communicated with tribal officials of the Southern Ute, the Ute Mountain Ute, the Jicarilla Apache, and the Navajo tribal nations. These contacts have resulted in suggestions to and improvements upon our work and we have gained some consensus. We have also coordinated with the Four Corners Air Quality Task Force, and other leaders in the air quality community.

We hope that you will find merit in this proposal and that the EPA will decide to establish the position in the Four Corners as a part of the EPA Headquarters organization. If we can provide any further information, or you or your staff would like to discuss these ideas further, please contact either LWV Montezuma County President Jodi Foran or LWV La Plata County President Stephanie Huss with the contact information below.

Sincerely,

Jodi Foran

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Members of Congress

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Representative Ben Lujan, New Mexico 3rd District

Senator Orrin Hatch, Utah
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ATTACHMENTS: 1) A Proposal for Streamlining EPA Jurisdiction in the Four Corners
2) Position Description: EPA Four Corners Air Quality Liaison