August 31, 2013

Commissioner John Kinkaid

Commissioner Tom Mathers  
221 W. Victory Way

Craig, CO 81625

Dear Mr. Mathers and Mr. Kinkaid:

I am disappointed with your decision to approve a secession referendum for November’s ballot. Your actions contradict the Moffat County Commissioner’s mission statement “to govern responsibility in accordance to the State Constitution” and “elevate the trust and understanding of citizens through public consent.” Your decision has a stark resemblance to the actions of Nancy Pelosi and her charge of “we have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it” when discussing the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) legislation.

If referendum passes, what is the next step? What will be the cost to secede from Colorado? How long will it take? What is the cost to put this referendum on the ballot? How will secession impact water rights? Will it impact our DOLA grant for Shadow Mountain? Did you consult with the coal industry stakeholders prior to adopting this referendum? Are Wyoming and/or Utah receptive to Moffat County joining their state? These are all questions that should be answered before putting any type of referendum on the November ballot.

If the voters pass this referendum it does not guarantee secession, it only guarantees that county will spend time and resources developing a plan that could take years to materialize and has little likelihood of gaining statewide and national legislative approval. How is this effective leadership? Instead of complaining about the injustices of a democratic system, why not direct your efforts to identifying strategies to address the problems of Moffat County with realistic and plausible solutions.

Does the county have a strategic plan for the next five, ten, fifteen years? Does this plan address the reality that the coal industry will continue to be under attack from state and federal regulations? Have you developed a plan on promoting the coal industry as an alternative energy source? Practice the “irreproachable stewardship of public resources” as claimed in your mission statement. Don’t mimic the arrogant ignorance of Mrs. Pelosi’s comment by placing a measure on the ballot that forces Moffat County citizens “to pass this ‘referendum’ so they can find out what is in it.” It is time for leadership, not abuse of the bully pulpit.

Sincerely,

Don Jones  
Craig City Councilman

Former Mayor of Craig Colorado

Local Business Owner