

To: MEAN Board of Directors

I live in rural Gunnison County, Colorado about 20 miles north of the City of Gunnison, a MEAN participant.

Gunnison County has a rich heritage of ranching and agriculture. Residents and visitors alike enjoy seeing our County's sprawling ranches, green pastures, and cow/calf pairs. We delight in yielding right of way to cattle as they are moved move alongside State Highway 135 each year.

But today the viability of ranching in Gunnison County is threatened by the environmental effects of climate change. A recent study by the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District found that

“. . . severe curtailments in water rights (required by 1922's Colorado River Compact) could trigger "tipping points" in which ranchers decide that their businesses are no longer viable and that they would be better off selling their land for development." [Gunnison Country Times, Jan 28, 2021]

Downstream drought can doom Gunnison County's ranches. Every year the likelihood increases as climate changes occur.

Nebraska faces similar existential problems described in the article "Nebraska Devastated by Multiple Extreme Weather Events: Impacts to military Base, Farming and Ranching, Families".

[\[https://www.eesi.org/articles/view/nebraska-devastated-by-multiple-extreme-weather-events\]](https://www.eesi.org/articles/view/nebraska-devastated-by-multiple-extreme-weather-events)

The "bomb cyclone" that swept through the Midwest in March [2019] reached a magnitude never before seen in the state, resulting in unprecedented flooding that has caused more than \$1 billion in damages and crippled state infrastructure and industry. Among those most seriously affected are rural farm communities across the state. . "

"The flooding in Nebraska and across the Midwest serves as a reminder that extreme weather events resulting from a changing climate are not limited to coastal regions."

With that background I'm surprised to see that MEANS' 2021 Resource Criteria Participant Survey placed Environmental Impact and Risk at the bottom of the 12 criteria used to decide the mix of fuels used to generate MEAN's electricity.

For example, the Criteria "Local Benefit" rated very high. Why wouldn't mitigating from potential severe weather and drought environmental risks also be rated high? The 2019 severe weather event caused over \$1 billion in damages.

Perhaps it's because local benefits directly accrue to the local participants. Reducing environmental risk only happens when communities work together across State boundaries for the common good.

Environmental actions which save ranches in Colorado also save ranches in Nebraska.

I assert that:

The MEAN IRP must include detailed, scientific analyses of the contributory risks and effects of severe weather events caused by increased atmospheric carbon resulting from MEAN's electricity generation. The analyses must include, as a minimum, scenarios contained in the draft IRP carbon goals, and new goals of

Interim carbon neutral goal: Change to 75% by 2030 (vs. 61% by 2035)

Carbon free goal: Change to 2040 (vs. 2050),

and other goals as determined by MEAN's scientific team.

Please feel free to contact me with questions or requests for any additional information.

Thank you for your consideration,

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