

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 18, 2020

Dr. Erin Phillips  
Research Scientist, Center for Economic Geology Research  
School of Energy Resources  
University of Wyoming  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071-2000

Re: Letter of support for the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources application for the Carbon Ore, Rare Earth and Critical Minerals (CORE-CM) Initiative for U.S. Basins, U.S. Department of Energy Office of Fossil Energy Funding Opportunity Announcement DE-FOA-0002364

Dear Dr. Phillips:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm our support for your proposed project, *Powder River Basin CORE-CM: Advancing Strategies for Carbon Ore, Rare Earth Element, and Critical Mineral Resource Development in the Nation's Largest Coal Producing Basin*, in response to the Carbon Ore, Rare Earth and Critical Minerals (CORE-CM) Initiative for U.S. Basins funding opportunity sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. The Powder River Basin region is well positioned to support carbon ore, rare earth element and critical minerals research and the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources has broad experience in all aspects of this work.

The strengths of the School of Energy Resources proposal include:


- The Powder River Basin is home to 16 coal mines that produce 43% of U.S. Coal and has nearly 1.16 trillion tons of reserves.
- The area in and around Gillette, Wyoming in the Powder River Basin is a hub for field testing energy technology and has been dubbed "Carbon Valley." Activities include characterization and extraction technologies for rare earth elements in coal and coal by-products, coal to products research, CO<sub>2</sub> to products research, and carbon capture, utilization, and storage research.
- The Powder River Basin includes the Bear Lodge Complex, a large unmined and fully characterized rare earth element deposit.
- A committed team of stakeholders including industry, state agencies, local and state officials, and academia.
- The Powder River Basin is a prime place to accelerate carbon ore research and development due to strong relationships with industry stakeholders, and wide-ranging support from city,

county, and state government, all of whom are committed to economic development in the region.

- The School of Energy Resources and other project partners have extensive experience in:
  - characterizing and interpreting rare earth elements and critical minerals in coal and coal by-products
  - energy policy and economics as it relates to energy supply chains,
  - coal to products research and development, and
  - energy related outreach and education.

The CORE-CM initiative is an important opportunity to advance applied research in carbon ore, rare earth elements and critical minerals in the Powder River Basin and we are pleased to support the proposal submitted by the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources.

Sincerely,

  
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John Barrasso, M.D.  
U.S. Senator

  
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Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress