

STATE HOUSE DISTRICT 31

2-YEAR TERM, VOTE FOR 1

Question 3

Every candidate agrees that the state's budget is the biggest topic of concern in Wyoming. A recent economic outlook called for a continuing economic downturn, although there are some positive signs. Candidates have offered a variety of solutions to diversify Wyoming's economy, but nothing that has the economic impact of the energy industry. What do you feel, specifically, Wyoming legislators should do to address the boom and bust cycle that seems to reign in the state and offer a long-term remedy for Wyomingites? Why do you feel that way?

Scott Clem

The answer here requires a two-pronged approach. First, I think we must recognize that though the energy and minerals industries are down, they are not out. These industries will continue to be a crucial part of Wyoming's success.

So what dampers these industries? Two things: markets and government regulation. Which do governments have more control over? Government regulation.

In sports, you have to know the rules of the game so you can know how to win. Who makes the rules when it comes to the majority of Wyoming's minerals?

If you said state government, you would be wrong. The federal government makes the rules, because it claims ownership of 67 percent of Wyoming's minerals.

This is why it takes 7-10 years just to get a lease to mine coal that is within Wyoming's borders. The state of Wyoming is not waging a war on coal and fossil fuels, it is the U.S. gov-



SCOTT CLEM

ernment (DOI, EPA, BLM, NFS, etc.).

So how do we change the rules of the game so that our energy industries and the Wyoming taxpayer wins? We have to transfer ownership of federal lands to the state.

This will help get rid of the excessive regulation our federal government is fond of and it will help steady the industry volatility. A recent study said that it would be too expensive with the state of Wyoming just managing these federal lands. We can't just transfer management, we must transfer ownership to the state.

Second, we must maintain a business-friendly environment. Increasing taxes during this downturn is foolish.

You'll often hear coaches tell their players to capitalize on their opponents' mistakes. Our state did this with MagPul when it moved from Colorado to Wyoming. We need to be hawkish when it comes to other states' mistakes.