

December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016

President-Elect Donald J. Trump,

I am writing to you to ask for your help on behalf of my city and my entire state. My name is Lori Shaw and I am a 25-year-old millennial that is trying to find a way to save my town. I am from a little place in Montana called Colstrip. As the name might suggest, Colstrip is a coal-mining town. We mine coal and we produce electricity with it. (2,200 megawatts or enough power for 1.5 Million homes.) Our coal mine and power plant are the very things that keep our town alive, as well as creating vital economic contributions for the entire state of Montana.

However, all of this is in danger of going away. Our town is being held hostage by radicals. The Sierra Club and a smaller organization called the Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC) have sued our power plant's owners and, through a settlement, forced them to agree to shut down two of the four units that make up the Colstrip Steam Electric Station. The verbiage of the settlement dictates that not only can the boilers of those two units *never burn anything again*, but they must also be **destroyed**. These predatory groups are eager to take a large economic driver away from the people of my city and state, without any affordable or realistic suggestions for how to replace what will be lost.

I fear for the future of my city as well as my beloved state of Montana. Besides being a 25-year old millennial, I am also the co-founder and director of a grassroots movement called the Colstrip United Movement. We are trying hard to fight back against misguided anti-coal agendas. In less than 1 year, we have garnered over 12,000 followers which is pretty big considering the population of Colstrip is only 2,300.

Mr. President, I love my city and I would do anything to save it. This city created me. Money is just money, and possessions are just things, but the feeling of being a part of this community is something that cannot be replaced. Anywhere I go in the city of Colstrip, folks say hello, they politely hold doors for me, and stop to chat about life. These chats are something I cherish, but I would be lying if I said that I didn't see the fear in their eyes when they ask me how our fight for coal is going. These people are tough. They are hardworking intelligent souls with families to feed and bills to pay. Given the short-sighted anti coal direction that small radical groups are driving this state toward, how am I supposed to look these good people in the eye and tell them that everything is going to be okay?

I tell them exactly what I believe in my heart: I tell them that there IS a future for coal and there is a future for communities that are sustained by the good paying jobs that Montana's coal industry provides. What makes me so sure? For starters, there is the fact that over 60 percent of Montanans support coal and coal energy. We are the silent majority, but we are finding our voices and becoming louder each and every day.

Secondly, I need only look at other countries that have tried to move away from coal. I believe we are going to follow the same path that Germany has stumbled down. Despite being the world leader in "green" energy, only a measly 10% of their country's energy needs were being supplied by renewables. But, because renewable power sources have been so unreliable, Germany has been forced to construct numerous new coal plants in an effort to replace the nuclear energy it had taken offline. In fact, back in 2013, Germany built more new coal-fired facilities than at any time in the past two decades – bringing an estimated 5,300 megawatts of new capacity online.

In a nutshell, Germany had to turn back to coal, because they simply couldn't get by without it.

Times do change, values do change, but human needs don't change. We need affordable, RELIABLE electricity and like it or not, humanity still needs coal. Maybe in the next 100+ years solar and wind technology will actually become viable (meaning they will be able to meet people's needs CONSISTENTLY and without being propped up by more costly subsidies than any other form of energy.)

The time to innovate is not when we are struggling to pay our bills. Innovative investment can be made when we have the financial ability to do so. Increase our prosperity by utilizing our most affordable and reliable resources so that we can afford to be pioneers in new technology geared towards increasing efficiency and decreasing environmental impact. Our state has the potential and the resources to achieve incredible technological breakthroughs and flourishing prosperity. Now, all we need is the freedom to pursue them. Getting rid of looming, absurd regulations like the Clean Power Plan and the Stream Protection Rule (or drastically changing them) would be a good start.

When the government is picking the winners and losers in our energy market, nobody wins. Our government is ignoring the true desires of the majority as they continue to doll out large subsidies for expensive unreliable green energy projects funded by our tax dollars while at the same time raining down a steady onslaught of new regulations designed to further choke out our most reliable and affordable energy industries. They don't want to leave it up to a truly free market to decide the fate of coal ...because they know coal would win. Reliable, affordable energy is the key to prosperity.

I AM an environmentalist. My passion and field of study was Environmental Horticulture Science and I am proud to say that plants and animals are my whole world. However, I believe that if you want to sacrifice your prosperity and standard of living for Mother Earth, that should be YOUR choice, not somebody else's. We are all children of the earth. Made from the dust, and to the dust we shall return. We get our very lives and sustenance from the earth. One of the inescapable laws of life is this; To live is to consume. Just like any living thing, if denied the ability to consume, a society will wither and perish. The goal of responsible consumption of our

resources is something I think all Americans can agree on. Responsible consumption means that we take only what we need and right now this country needs MORE. Not less.

To deny the people of this country the ability to utilize their resources to **sufficiently** sustain themselves is unethical. Whether it be through heavy-handed regulation, or through the efforts of radical activists, to deny the people of the ability to use their resources is the same thing as taking the food off their tables and the shoes off their feet. It is time that America's PEOPLE join the list of our top priorities for preservation.

Right now there are communities just like Colstrip all across the state and country that depend on resource industries that are under attack by groups that operate under the guise of environmentalism. These radical organizations like the Sierra club and the MEIC cannot hide or run away from the suffering they are causing in these communities.

We will stand together. We will rise up. And we will fight back.

But we can't fight back alone. Will you be a voice of leadership to help us fight back against organizations like the Sierra Club, the MEIC, and the other forces that wish to destroy our vital resource industries and the hardworking families that depend on them?

Please visit my website at [www.colstrip-united.org](http://www.colstrip-united.org)

I would very much like to hear from you and your staff. Thank you for reading my letter and for stepping up to the plate of Presidential service to our country. My goal in sending this letter to you is to let you know that I am willing and eager to communicate and collaborate with you in order to address the issues that our coal industry is facing and to act as a voice for this grassroots movement that has ignited and inspired pro-coal people across our entire country.

I'm looking forward to seeing what you will accomplish in your Presidential term and I wish you the best as you guide the United States of America into an even brighter future.

Warmly,

Lori Shaw  
Colstrip United Movement  
Co-founder & Director