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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NORTHWEST COLORADO RESPONDS TO MISINFORMATION, DEMANDS RETRACTION
FROM *THE COLORADO SUN* AND *KUNC***

RIFLE, COLORADO (January 20, 2025) – The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) and the Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI) are calling for the immediate retraction of a recent article published by *The Colorado Sun*, originally produced by *KUNC*, which contains significant inaccuracies and misrepresents research being conducted to assist energy transition communities in Northwest Colorado. The reporting disregards the context provided during interviews, distorts the facts, and undermines trust in AGNC’s transparent, community-centered approach to tackling economic challenges.

“The article in question falsely portrays AGNC and NCEI as promoting initiatives—such as consent-based siting for spent nuclear fuel—without community consent. That is simply incorrect,” stated Tiffany Dickenson, Executive Director at AGNC. “We are not advocating or pushing an agenda. Our focus remains to engage with local community leaders, providing research-based information, and facilitating discussions so that stakeholders and residents can evaluate potential opportunities for themselves.”

Proactive Engagement Misrepresented

AGNC and NCEI granted interviews to *KUNC* to provide full transparency on the sensitive nature of energy transition research. *The Colorado Sun* picked up this story without first fact checking details. During discussions with *KUNC*, it was explicitly cautioned to the writer about the importance of reporting this topic responsibly to avoid unnecessary controversy or alarm within the region. Unfortunately, these warnings were disregarded, leading to a misleading narrative that risks derailing productive conversations and creating undue anxiety.

Egregious Misrepresentation

Most egregiously, the article insinuates that AGNC prioritizes federal interests over local ones—an assertion that is fundamentally opposed to the mission and actions of AGNC. This portrayal is not only incorrect but damaging, as it fosters unnecessary controversy and concern. AGNC has and will put the voice and needs of the region over federal interests.

(more)

Distinction Between AGNC and NCEI

AGNC and NCEI are distinct entities with complementary missions. The article falsely characterizes this organization as a “small economic development group” representing six counties in Northwest Colorado. AGNC is, first and foremost, a Council of Governments focused on regional advocacy, supporting local governments, and promoting economic development for Colorado’s Planning and Management Region 11 including the four counties of: Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, and Rio Blanco. AGNC is also the federally designated Economic Development District for these counties and Routt County. Delta, Grand, and Montrose Counties are all associate members of AGNC, being represented in our legislative and lobbying services.

NCEI is a research-focused initiative exploring viable options for energy transition to ensure long-term economic stability in Northwest Colorado. NCEI has its own Board of Directors, outside of the AGNC Board of Directors, for oversight. Misrepresenting these roles diminishes the integrity and roles of both entities and misleads the public. NCEI operates under the purview of AGNC.

Why This Work Matters

Northwest Colorado’s coal communities are facing an unprecedented economic transition as coal assets are retired. The resulting loss of GDP and local jobs creates an urgent need to explore sustainable, long-term solutions. AGNC and NCEI are proactively seeking opportunities to stabilize local economies and build resilience for the future. This research is part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring Northwest Colorado communities can thrive despite these challenges.

Demand for Retraction

Given the significant inaccuracies and misleading framing, the leaders within AGNC and NCEI formally request *The Colorado Sun* and *KUNC* retract the article in full, from all platforms. Accurate and responsible reporting is essential, especially when addressing issues critical to the economic and social future of Northwest Colorado.

A Commitment to Northwest Colorado

AGNC remains committed to fostering economic resilience and empowering community-driven decision-making in Northwest Colorado. Our efforts are rooted in transparency, inclusivity, and respect for the voices of the communities we serve.

For more information about the Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative or to participate in ongoing community discussions, visit www.AGNC.org/NCEI.

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About AGNC (www.agnc.org) The Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC) serves as the Council of Governments for Garfield, Mesa, Moffat, and Rio Blanco Counties and functions as the Economic Development District (EDD), as designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration

(EDA) for those counties, with the addition of Routt County. AGNC's mission is to advocate, inform, and reflect the needs of its members by promoting the values, industries, and economies of Northwest Colorado.

About NCEI (www.agnc.org/ncei) The Northwest Colorado Energy Initiative (NCEI), operating under the purview of the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado (AGNC), stands at the forefront of community-driven initiatives in Northwest Colorado. The advisory board members are: former Colorado State House Majority Leader and Colorado Mesa University (CMU) President Emeritus Tim Foster, former Colorado State Senator Bob Rankin, Mesa County Commissioner Cody Davis, Garfield County Commissioner Mike Samson, Rio Blanco County Commissioner Doug Overton, former Moffat County Commissioner Ray Beck, and AGNC Executive Director Tiffany Dickenson. Former Town of Eagle Council Member Matt Solomon is the project manager.