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## **Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement Opens Public Comment Period on Environmental Assessment of Proposed Mining Plan Modification for Trapper Mine**

Washington, DC – [The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement](#) (OSMRE) today released an Environmental Assessment (EA) and unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on a proposed modification of the original mining plan for the [Trapper Coal Mine near Craig, Colorado](#). The EA discloses the potential for direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to the environment that may occur as a result of current and future mining on two Federal leases, including the potential environmental impacts of burning the coal from the two leases.

The EA is the result of a federal court approved agreement with a citizens group and the mine operator that required OSMRE to conduct a new environmental study under the National Environmental Policy Act for exercising mining rights under two leases administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

The two federal coal leases, issued in 1958 and 1962, cover approximately 2,423 acres of Federal mineral estate and contain about 19 million tons of recoverable coal. If the mining plan modification is approved, about 254 additional acres of land would be disturbed during the estimated 10-year life of the mine. Trapper Mining Inc. produces a maximum rate of 2.6 million tons of coal per year from the leases. It uses a combination of dragline, truck shovel, and highwall mining methods to remove the overburden and mine the coal.

The proposed modification is not affected by the Interior Department's pause on federal coal leasing announced last Friday because regulatory actions under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act are not subject to the pause.

OSMRE solicited comments on the modification during a [public meeting last October to help determine the issues and alternatives that would be evaluated in the environmental study](#). The EA, unsigned FONSI and related documents to the proposed modified mining plan are now available for public examination and comment on OSMRE's [Western Region website](#).

The Bureau is soliciting public comment before making a final decision on the operator's request to mine new areas of two federal coal leases.

OSMRE is accepting written comments on the FONSI and EA through February 19, 2016 via e-mail to [osm-nepa-co@osmre.gov](mailto:osm-nepa-co@osmre.gov) or by mail: ATTN: OSMRE Trapper Mine EA, C/O: Nicole Caveny, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Western Region, 1999 Broadway, Suite 3320, Denver, CO 80202. OSMRE will carefully consider all comments that are submitted in a



timely manner.

Once the comment period closes, OSMRE will prepare and submit a final decision document to the Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management, recommending approval, disapproval, or conditional approval of the mining plan modification, as required under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920.

OSMRE is responsible for reviewing plans to conduct coal mining and reclamation operations, including mining plan modifications, on lands containing leased federal coal.

*The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement carries out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 in cooperation with states and tribes. OSMRE's objectives are to ensure that coal mining activities are conducted in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, to ensure that the land is restored to beneficial use after mining, and to mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines. For instant updates on OSMRE, follow the bureau's Twitter feed at [www.twitter.com/OSMRE](http://www.twitter.com/OSMRE).*

