



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management &
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

NEWS RELEASE

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BLM and OSMRE seek comments on Coyote Creek coal lease application *Pilot project increases efficiencies across two Interior agencies, streamlines NEPA review of leasing and permitting coal mining*

(DICKINSON, N.D.) – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) are seeking public scoping comments regarding the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) that will analyze potential impacts from leasing 320 acres of federal coal to the Coyote Creek Mining Company adjacent to its existing Coal Creek Mine in Mercer County.

The BLM and OSMRE EA is part of an innovative Department of the Interior pilot project to streamline required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. In order to increase operational efficiencies, the BLM and OSMRE are working as co-lead agencies on an EA that will allow each agency to issue its own findings regarding the significance of potential impacts resulting from leasing and permitting coal mining.

The purpose of the scoping process is to obtain feedback from the public on relevant issues that may influence the development of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for preparing the environmental assessment. Comments will be accepted for a 15-day period ending on Oct. 29, 2018.

The BLM and OSMRE also plan to have the draft EA available for public review period by late fall of 2018, at which time public comments on the document and associated analyses will be accepted and considered.

As the federal government's manager of public minerals, the BLM has responsibility for overseeing completion of the EA associated with federal coal leasing and exploration. The North Dakota Public Service Commission is the regulatory authority responsible for issuing permits for coal mining and reclamation in accordance with the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, and OSMRE is responsible for reviewing mining plans for federal coal and providing recommendations before the mining plan is approved in accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920.

For more details on the proposal, how to comment and pertinent contact information, go to the BLM ePlanning website at <https://eplanning.blm.gov> and conduct a "Text Search" for the project NEPA number DOI-BLM-MT-0000-2018-0006-EA. Information on the proposed project, the associated EA,

and public involvement opportunities can also be found on the OSMRE website at <https://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/coyoteCreekMine.shtm>.

Those who intend to provide comments are advised that including an address, phone number, email address or other personal-identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While those commenting can ask in their comments to have personal-identifying information withheld from public review, the agencies cannot guarantee that they will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations, from businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of organizations or businesses, will be available for public review.

For more information contact the BLM Project Manager, Joel Hartmann, at (406)896-5159 or the OSMRE Project Manager, Logan Sholar, at (303)293-5036.

– BLM & OSMRE–

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Diverse activities authorized on these lands generated \$96 billion in sales of goods and services throughout the American economy in fiscal year 2017. These activities supported more than 468,000 jobs.

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The OSMRE 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.