

News Release

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation & Enforcement
A Bureau of the U. S. Department of the Interior



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mining Plan Modification for Colorado's West Elk Mine Approved Following Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

*Action adds 1,720 Federal acres, authorizes the mining of approximately
10 million tons of Federal coal and adds a projected two years to the life of the mine.*

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) has issued an approved mining plan modification to add approximately 1,720 Federal acres to the approved mining plan area of the West Elk Mine in Gunnison County, Colorado.

The action would add approximately two years to the life of the mine, authorizing the mining of approximately 10 million tons of Federal coal. The underground facility is located about one mile east of Somerset, Colorado and currently employs 300 people. The mine is projected to produce an average of 4.5 million tons per year.

OSMRE adopted the 2017 U.S. Forest Service's Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement for Federal Coal Lease Modifications COC-1362 and COC-67232 (including on-lease exploration plan). Details about the project are available at [West Elk Mine Project Details](#).

The West Elk Mine permit provides for a post-mine land use of rangeland and wildlife habitat which will continue with this modification. The Colorado Division of Reclamation, Mining and Safety holds a reclamation performance bond in the amount of \$14,401,088 on the site. Reclamation performance bonds are held by the state to ensure that post-mining reclamation of a site is accomplished in the event that a company cannot carry out its legally required reclamation obligations.

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (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.

