



United States Department of the Interior



OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT
Western Region
1999 Broadway St., Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202-3050

February 17, 2016

Dear Stakeholders and Interested Parties,

The U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Western Region Office has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the Coteau Properties Company's Freedom Mine, West Mine Area. The EA has been prepared to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed mining plan modification for the West Mine Area at the Freedom Mine.

OSMRE is responsible for reviewing plans to conduct coal mining and reclamation operations on lands containing leased Federal coal. Pursuant to 30 CFR 746, OSMRE must prepare and submit to the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management (ASLM) a decision document recommending approval, conditional approval or disapproval of the proposed mining plan modification. ASLM approval of the mining plan modification would authorize mining activities on 960 acres of Federal coal lease NDM 91535 within the existing, state approved mine permit boundary. The Freedom Mine is located approximately 10 miles north of Beulah, in Mercer County, North Dakota. The mining plan modification proposes to mine Federal coal located in the N1/2 of Section 10 and all of Section 14, T145N, R88W, fifth principal meridian.

By this letter, OSMRE is notifying you that the EA and the unsigned finding of no significant impact (FONSI) has been completed and is available for public review and comment as of February 18, 2016. All comments must be received or post marked by March 19, 2016 for consideration.

The EA and unsigned FONSI can be reviewed online at the following OSMRE website:

<http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/freedommine.shtm>

A printed copy of the EA and unsigned FONSI can also be reviewed at the following location:

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Western Region
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320,
Denver, CO 80202
Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

Beulah Public Library
116 N Central Ave.
Beulah, ND 58523

Between the hours of: 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday; 9:00 AM and 12:00 PM, Saturday (October – March); (Closed Sunday)

North Dakota Public Service Commission
Reclamation Division
State Capitol – 13th Floor
600 E. Boulevard, Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday
(Closed Saturday and Sunday)

You are invited to direct your written comments on the EA and unsigned FONSI to:

ATTN: Freedom Mine West Mine Area EA
C/O: Lauren Mitchell
OSMRE Western Region
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202

Comments may also be emailed to: OSM-NEPA-ND@OSMRE.gov. Be sure to send emails with the subject line:

ATTN: Freedom Mine West Mine Area EA

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – will be publicly available. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

All submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be available for public review to the extent consistent with applicable law. OSMRE kindly request that you refer to the specific chapter, section, and/or page number of the EA and/or FONSI that is associated with your comment.

Additional information regarding this project may be obtained from Lauren Mitchell at (303) 293-5028 or lmitchell2@osmre.gov.

Sincerely,

Marcelo Calle, Manager
Field Operations Branch