



United States Department of the Interior



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

November 4, 2019

Dear Stakeholders and Interested Parties,

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), Western Region Office, will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) for a federal mining plan modification for the Antelope Mine lease by modification (LBM) to federal coal lease WYW-177903 (the Project). In accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (MLA), The DOI Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management (ASLM) must approve the Project before any mining and reclamation can occur on lands containing leased federal coal. The LBM application was filed with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) by Antelope Coal, LLC (AC) on November 29, 2012. As a result, the BLM prepared EA# WY-060-EA13-147 in cooperation with the OSMRE, which was published in March 2014. BLM subsequently issued a finding of no significant impact for the lease modification and the LBM was issued on February 1, 2018. AC operates the Antelope Mine under Permit No. PT0525 issued by Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ)-Land Quality Division (LQD) in accordance with the approved Wyoming State Coal Regulatory Program (30 CFR Part 950).

OSMRE is preparing an EA to evaluate the environmental impacts resulting from the Project, pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Antelope Mine is located approximately 20 miles south of Wright, Wyoming and 55 miles north of Douglas, Wyoming. Antelope Mine uses a truck and shovel and dragline mining method. The amount of remaining recoverable federal coal authorized for removal within the currently approved federal mining plan is approximately 409.6 million tons (Mt). The Project proposes to add approximately 856.6 acres and 15.8 Mt of mineable federal coal to the approved federal mining plan. The annual production rate used to calculate the environmental impacts resulting from the Proposed Action will be 30 million tons per year (Mtpy), which is the estimated future annual production rate suggested by Antelope Mine and is below the maximum permitted production rate of 52 Mtpy set by WDEQ-Air Quality Division (AQD) air quality permit MD-13361. Antelope Mine started operation in 1982 and the mine will continue to operate until 2039 under the current, approved mining plan. Using the estimated 30 Mtpy production rate, the Project would extend the life of the mine by approximately 0.5 year.

The EA will disclose the potential for direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the environment from the Project. Further, the EA will update, clarify, and provide new and additional environmental information for the Project. Through the EA process, OSMRE will determine whether or not there are significant environmental impacts. An environmental impact statement will be prepared if the EA identifies significant impacts. If a finding of no significant impact is reached, and pursuant to 30 CFR § 746.13, OSMRE will prepare and submit to the ASLM a mining plan decision document recommending approval, disapproval, or conditional approval of the mining plan modification. The ASLM will approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve the mining plan modification, as required under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920.

OSMRE is soliciting public comments on the Project. Your comments will help to determine the issues and alternatives that will be evaluated in the environmental analysis. You are invited to direct these comments to:

ATTN: West Antelope II South Modification EA
C/O: Gretchen Pinkham,
OSMRE Western Region
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320,
Denver, CO 80202-3050

Comments may also be emailed to: osm-nepa-wy@osmre.gov, ensure the subject line reads: ATTN: OSMRE, West Antelope II South Modification EA. Comments should be received or postmarked no later than December 3, 2019 to be considered during the preparation of the EA. Comments received, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection. Additional information regarding the Project may be obtained from Gretchen Pinkham, telephone number (303) 293-5088 and the Project website provided below. When available, the EA and other supporting documentation will be posted at: <http://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/westantelopeMine.shtm>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Shaeffer", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Elizabeth Shaeffer, Manager
Field Operations Branch

Attachment: Location Map

