



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Tres Rios Field Office
29211 Highway 184
Dolores, CO 81323



OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT
WESTERN REGION
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, CO 80202

In Reply Refer To:
FILE CODE (COS01000)
RE: COC-78825

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD AND PUBLIC HEARING
Availability of Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2019-0003-EA
Dunn Ranch Area Lease-by-Application and Mine Plan Modification

July 5, 2019

OPTIONAL REPLY: DUE August 5, 2019

On January 10, 2018, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received a Lease by Application (LBA) from GCC Energy, LLC (GCCE) for a new proposed coal lease on split estate lands as an extension to the King II Mine, located in La Plata County, Colorado. The LBA seeks to add 2,462 acres of land immediately north and northwest of GCCE's existing federal lease and mine operations. The BLM and Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) have jointly prepared a preliminary environmental assessment (EA) to analyze the potential impacts of leasing and mining the federal coal.

BLM and OSMRE initiated a 30-day public review period starting on July 05, 2019 to receive comments on the preliminary EA. The BLM is also holding a public hearing to receive public comments on the fair market value and maximum economic recovery of the federal coal in the LBA, and on the preliminary EA, Wednesday, July 24 from 6 to 8 pm at the BLM Tres Rios Field Office, 29211 Highway 184, Dolores, CO 81323. An information session on the project and EA will also be held on that day from 5 to 6 pm at the same location. Comments may be submitted verbally at the hearing, otherwise they must be submitted electronically through BLM's ePlanning website at <https://go.usa.gov/xEKTv> and must be received by August 5, 2019.

By including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personally identifying information, may be made publically available at any time. 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.

A copy of the preliminary EA, along with copies of this letter, maps, and other pertinent information are available on BLM's ePlanning website, and at OSMRE's website at: <https://www.wrcc.osmre.gov/initiatives/kingIICoalMine.shtm>. Additional documentation including the EA and decision documents will be posted on these sites as they become available. Comments may also be submitted via postal service at the following address:

BLM - Tres Rios Field Office and OSMRE – Western Region
Attn: King II Coal Dunn Ranch EA
Dolores Public Lands Office
29211 Highway 184
Dolores, CO 81323

Project Summary:

This proposed new federal coal lease lies under surface estate primarily owned by the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and is referred to as the “Dunn Ranch” property. BLM has determined that the LBA holds approximately 9.54 million tons of recoverable federally-owned coal. The existing mine would connect to the LBA area by an engineered, underground, steel-lined haulage tunnel referred to in the preliminary EA as the “low-cover crossing”. The low-cover crossing would be excavated from the surface and then buried and the surface reclaimed. Up to 10 acres of surface would be disturbed during construction of the low-cover crossing over a six-month period. The coal would then be mined by underground mining methods as an extension of the existing King II mine.

A total of up to 17 million tons of combined federally and privately-owned coal could be mined over the life of the mine. This total includes the federally owned coal in the LBA, unmined coal at the existing mine, privately-owned coal that would be mined while accessing the federal coal in the LBA, and additional unproven private coal that would be accessed from the LBA area. If all 17 million tons were proven to be recoverable, the King II mine could operate for another 22 years.

A total of up to 20 acres of surface disturbance could occur over the 22 years. This would include the 10 acres of initial surface disturbance for the construction of the low-cover crossing, and up to a total of an additional 10 acres of dispersed surface disturbance for other typically required activities over the life of the mine.

If you have questions about the BLM coal program or analysis, please contact James Blair at (970) 882-1135. For questions regarding the OSMRE NEPA process, please contact Gretchen Pinkham at (303) 293-5088.

Sincerely,

Connie Clementson

Connie Clementson
Field Manager
BLM – Tres Rios Field Office



Mychal Yellowman
Manager, Indian Program Branch
OSMRE – Western Region