

December 31, 2002

Crow Tribe of Indians
Environmental Protection Programs Office
Ann Martin, Project Coordinator
P.O. Box 159
Crow Agency, MT 59022

Subject: (Final) Crow Indian Reservation: Natural, Socio-Economic, And Cultural Resources Assessment and Conditions Report (Crow Report)

Dear Ann:

LAO Environmental, Inc. (LAO) is pleased to submit 20 copies of the referenced document to the Crow Tribe of Indians.

The referenced document contains changes to the Draft Crow Report. The changes were based on comments to the Draft Crow Report from the Crow Tribe and BLM. We also made changes based on our further research, which includes information that we developed with your staff during our review of Tribal and BLM comments, and our responses to those comments.

Three major changes in this document have replaced parts of the previous Tribal Government, Regulatory Framework, and Culture and History sections with new information from the Crow Tribe.

We have incorporated the new information from the Crow Tribe by using documents prepared by tribal officials. We also have attached to this letter a table that tracks our responses to BLM's written comments on the Draft Crow Report. There were 25 BLM comments, and generally, we have answered those questions and made recommended changes.

This Final Crow Report is intended for use with the *Montana Statewide Revised Draft/Final Oil and Gas Environmental Impact Statement and Amendments of the Powder River and Billings Resource Management Plan (January 2002)*. *We recommend the Crow Tribe be provided a draft copy of that document(s) for internal review prior to its public release.*

In our coordination with Tribal staff over the past six weeks, LAO prepared this document between March 1 and April 15, 2002. Data collection continued through the period of preparation for the document. As a result of the brief schedule for data collection and document preparation, certain agencies may have been unable to assemble and provide additional information that is relevant to this document.

We used information from a variety of sources, including Tribal records and files, records and files of federal, state and local governments, literature, and personal interviews. No new or original studies were completed as part of this document.

While this document presents information about the Crow Tribe and the Crow Indian Reservation for inclusion in the Statewide Revised Draft/Final Oil and Gas EIS, we understand the Tribe does not consider it to be complete for purposes of evaluating any specific project related to exploration or production of oil and gas resources on or near the reservation.

The format of this document is based on the format of Chapter 3: Affected Environment in the Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS. To the extent information was available for data collection and document preparation (i.e., January-April 15, 2002), this document addresses the affected environment related to the resources of the Crow Indian Reservation.

We understand this document does not represent comments of the Crow Tribe about the content of the Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS. The Tribe will provide those comments as participants in the public hearing process for that document.

As we have discussed previously, LAO Environmental will be available to review and present the results of the report to the Crow Tribe. You can contact me at (406) 656-2244 or e-mail at dolson@laolson.com.

Sincerely,

Darryl L. Olson,
Environmental Division Manager

cc mb, blm
lao
att comment-response track table