

From: Stolte, Christopher
To: [Katharine MacGregor](#)
Subject: Energy Report Comments
Date: Wednesday, October 25, 2017 10:21:17 AM
Attachments: [10-24-17 DOI 6 Months Accomplishments V3 - DRAFT Only.docx](#)
[FINAL CLEAN Potential Initiatives V3 - DRAFT.docx](#)

Kate,

I wanted to check-in and see if you had any feedback on the energy report(s) update. For reference and working, please see the attachments that incorporate the feedback that I have received from others.

Let me know if you have any questions or need additional follow-up.

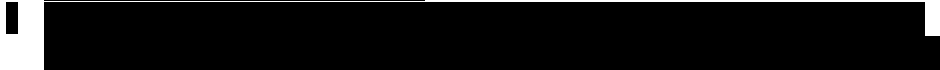
Thanks,

Chris

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1. **Predictable Leasing and Permitting on Public Lands** - One of the primary impediments to energy development on public lands has been ensuring access to and availability of those lands and the length of time it takes to complete the lease sale and permitting processes. In accordance with Secretarial Order 3354 entitled “Supporting and Improving the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Program and Federal Solid Mineral Program” (July 5, 2017), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has made great strides in making more lands available for energy leasing, including conducting quarterly oil and gas lease sales utilizing internet bidding. To date, BLM has improved its oil and gas leasing and permitting processes. For example, between January 2017 and today, BLM conducted 20 oil and gas lease sales, offering 874,270 acres for lease, and sold 506,226 acres—generating more than \$316 million bonus bids. By comparison, during the same period last year, BLM conducted only 14 lease sales, and made available only 412,487 acres, and sold 239,207 acres, generating approximately \$161 million in bonus bids. Moreover, the BLM has improved permitting times considerably. In January 2017, the average amount of time necessary to complete oil and gas permitting processes was 257 days – with much of that time spent refining the application with the operator. As a result of this Administration’s emphasis on reaching more reasonable permitting timeframes and embracing technological solutions that reduce front-end filing issues, APD processing times have been reduced by 46 days. the average times now range from between 44 to 69 days.

2. **Streamline Planning/NEPA Report** – Each year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) spends roughly \$48 million for the planning process and completes more than 5,000 documents to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. The Federal land management planning process is broken, with many local communities and states waiting years for plan or plan amendments to come to completion. In March 2017, Secretary Zinke issued a memorandum identifying the land management process as unnecessarily lengthy and burdensome, and directed BLM to identify and implement improvements to this process so that it takes less time, costs less money and is more responsive to local needs. The BLM is currently finalizing a report with recommendations that will be submitted to Departmental leadership for review.

2.3. **Sage Grouse RMPs** – Secretary Zinke directed the Department through Secretarial Order 3353 entitled “Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation and Cooperation with Western States” (June 8, 2017) to conduct a review of the Bureau of Land Management’s 2015 Sage-Grouse Plans due to concerns raised by Western States and the negative impacts on developing our energy resources. Upon consultation with the states, a Department review team provided recommendations to the Secretary to streamline land use authorizations, modify or issue new policy on mineral leasing and development, and to investigate the removal, or modification of Sage-Grouse Focal Areas. Accordingly, the Secretary directed the Deputy Secretary to immediately begin the process of implementing the recommendations furthering the Administration’s energy development priorities.

3.4. **Establishment of an Energy Counselor** - To ensure energy policies receive the highest level attention across the Department of the Interior, Secretary Zinke established the

Counselor to the Secretary for Energy Policy position to coordinate the energy policy of Department, including, but not limited to, promoting responsible development of energy on public lands managed and administered by the Department, developing strategies to eliminate or minimize regulatory burdens that unnecessarily encumber energy, and promoting efficient and effective processing of energy-related authorizations, permits, regulations, and agreements. *See* Secretarial Order 3351, “Strengthening the Department of the Interior’s Energy Portfolio” (May 1, 2017). Establishing this position that reports directly to the Secretary assures that developing America’s energy resources in a responsible way to create jobs and enhance the energy security of the United States will remain a central priority.

4.5. Re-establishment of the Royalty Policy Committee – Currently, Federal law requires that the Department of the Interior share specified revenues (bonus bids, rents, and royalties) with states as a result of energy and mineral resource development on public lands throughout the United States. Certain policies and regulations put into place by the Department of the Interior under the last Administration discouraged energy and mineral development on Federal lands, which in turn reduced the associated revenues shared with states and localities. For example, the BLM Coal Leasing moratorium prevented coal leasing on Federal lands, revenues from which are shared with many Western states. The last Administration also eliminated the Royalty Policy Committee – a FACA committee that provided important advice and recommendations on royalty policies. In March, Secretary Zinke re-established the Royalty Policy Committee and has since appointed members to serve on this committee. The first ~~meeting for the~~ committee meeting was held~~will be~~ on October 4, 2017.