

Scoping Notice

Sodium Lease–WYW183702

Description of Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Kemmerer Field Office (KFO) has received an application for a sodium lease from Tata Chemicals (Soda Ash) Partners (Tata) to support expansion of its existing mining operations. The lease application, WYW183702, is located in the federal portion of Section 12, Township 17 North, Range 109 West, containing approximately 401.63 acres adjacent to Tata's Alchem Mine. The decision to be made by the BLM Authorized Officer is whether or not to offer the lease tract for competitive sale by sealed bid.

The application area is located approximately 10 miles southwest of Green River, Wyoming, in Sweetwater County. If Tata is the successful bidder, this lease would be used to expand their current operation which consists of an underground trona mine and associated soda ash plant which have been in operation since 1968. Should Tata be the successful bidder, they plan to continue utilizing their current room and pillar mining method and the mining method would preclude subsidence. No surface disturbance, operations or facilities are proposed. Tata currently mines Bed 17 which in Section 12 ranges from 1,270 to 1,450 feet below surface.

The attached map shows the current Tata sodium leases issued by the BLM and by private land holders, as well as the surface and federal mineral ownership in the competitive lease area.

Relationship to Land Use Plans

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Approved Kemmerer Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision, effective May 24, 2010. The Proposed Action is specifically allowed for in the following RMP decision(s):

Decision 2016 – All public lands (outside of the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area and exceptions identified in the RMP) within the planning area are available for sodium leasing consideration.

Compliance with National Environmental Policy Act

The sodium lease competitive bid is subject to the appropriate level of environmental analysis. To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and the Council of Environmental Quality regulations, which implement NEPA, the BLM is required to conduct an environmental analysis.

Land and Resource Management Issues and Concerns

A BLM interdisciplinary team of resource specialists will be involved in the analysis of the environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Land and resource issues tentatively identified as potentially affected by this proposed action include: cultural resources, geology/mineral resources, wastes (hazardous or solid), socioeconomics, and air quality.

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The BLM is requesting the public's help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives for analysis, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Written substantive scoping comments should be received by May 26, 2015, and may be submitted via facsimile, email, mail, or hand-delivery during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) to:

Travis Chewning, Planning and Environmental Specialist
Tata Sodium Lease – WYW183702
BLM Kemmerer Field Office
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Kemmerer, WY 83101
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Please list “Tata Sodium Lease - WYW183702” in the subject line.