

Chris Hite
Chief, Branch of Fluid Minerals Adjudication
Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road
Cheyenne, WY 82009

June 5, 2015

Dear Mr. Hite,

In accordance with 43 C.F.R § 3120.1-3, I protest the sale of oil and gas lease sale parcel WY-1508-072 included in the Bureau of Land Management's August 2015 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale Notice. In coordination with the Clark Resource Council, Clark residents, and other like-minded organizations, I submitted comments on the assessment for this sale on February 23, 2015.

PROTESTING PARTIES

I am a landowner in the Line Creek Wilderness Subdivision. A portion of my land surface would be impacted by the sale of federal minerals for parcel WY-1508-072. My property includes lot 52, Line Creek Wilderness Subdivision, as located in Book "C" of plats, Page 56, according to the records of the County Clerk and Recorder of Park County, State of Wyoming.

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

I have an interest in sale of this parcel for two reasons. First, the Bureau of Land Management did not notify me of the nomination by following the correct procedure for landowner notification regarding the nomination of federal minerals under split estate parcels such as mine. Secondly, I am concerned about the adverse effects the leasing of parcel WY-1508-072 would have on the environmental integrity, quality of life and property values of my private property.

LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION

This parcel should be deferred from this lease sale until the agency can demonstrate its procedures for the assessing environmental impacts is complete. I was not notified by the agency that this parcel would be made available for sale before the development of the environmental assessment. Instead, friends and neighbors brought this fact to my attention just in time to comment on the prepared document. We submitted those comments on February 23, 2015. However, according to the BLM's own rules in the handbook on competitive leases, landowner notification is an essential step during the *preparation* of that environmental assessment. This would have required communication or a site visit from agency personnel before that document was published. If the agency is to take into consideration the views of surface owners of split estate parcels, that communication needs to have happened before the assessment was completed. Because this did not happen and I was not given due notice before the environmental assessment was completed, this parcel should be deferred until we can work together to complete the procedure according to the regulations in place.

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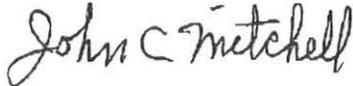
I did receive a site visit on February 23, 2015, which was the final day of the closure of the comment period on the environmental assessment, after I contacted the Cody office of BLM. While I appreciated this step, it was too late for an opportunity to express my full understanding of the situation and perspective for that comment period, or to work collaboratively with the agency on offering the parcel for sale. Please defer this parcel from this sale in order for us to work together regarding its possible sale.

ADVERSE IMPACTS

I fully understand the rights and responsibilities of being a surface owner of a split estate parcel and those rights attributed to a party that may lease the minerals. However, I purchased this land to provide habitat for wildlife, and for a quality of life that includes access to the outdoors, hunting, a peaceful retirement, a healthy existence, and as an investment for my family.

Thank you for your consideration of this protest. Please remove parcel WY-1508-072 from the August oil and gas lease sale until we can work together.

Respectfully submitted,



John C. Mitchell
143 Louis L'Amour Lane
Clark, WY 82435