United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Wyoming State Office
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Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003-1828

In Reply Refer To:
1610, 3100 (920Claypool)

APR 01 2011

CERTIFIED – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Monte Morlock
United Steel Workers of America 13214
2904 Westridge Drive
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Dear Mr. Morlock:

Thank you for your July 15, 2010, letter recommending the Greater Little Mountain Area for Master Leasing Plan (MLP) analysis.

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Oil and Gas Leasing Reform policy, Washington Office Instruction Memorandum No. 2010-117, issued on May 17, 2010, introduced the MLP concept as a means of carrying out additional planning, analysis, and decision-making for oil and gas leasing and future development. The BLM proposes to conduct MLP analysis in areas based on the criteria as outlined in its Leasing Reform policy. Under this policy, the BLM will take a focused look at likely development, and this analysis may result in changes to resource management plan (RMP) decisions pertaining to post-leasing development. Some MLP analyses will be undertaken independently of any other land use planning efforts, while others will be undertaken as a part of ongoing or upcoming revisions or amendments to RMPs.

Implementation of the policy is expected to make oil and gas leasing more predictable, increase certainty for stakeholders, and restore needed balance to the development process by improving protections for land, water, and wildlife. In addition, the policy will reduce potential conflicts that can lead to costly and time-consuming protests and litigation of leases.

Based on the MLP criteria set forth in the policy, the BLM conducted an extensive assessment of the geographic areas you recommended. These areas, Absoraka-Beartooth Front, Fifteen Mile Area, Bighorn Front, Dubois, Beaver Rim, and Greater Little Mountain are within the boundaries of planning areas for which there are ongoing revisions or amendments to RMPs. The BLM expects to incorporate MLP analysis of those areas into these RMP processes.

This letter does not constitute a proposed amendment or revision to any RMP and is not a decision that is appealable to the Interior Board of Land Appeals. When the BLM proposes an amendment or revision to an RMP that incorporates MLP analysis, the proposed amendment or revision may be protested under 43 CFR 1610.5-2.

We look forward to initiating MLP analyses as discussed above. Thank you for your recommendation and continued interest in oil and gas leasing reform. If you have any questions, please contact Larry Claypool, Deputy State Director for Minerals and Lands at (307) 775-6148.

Sincerely,

Donald A. Simpson
State Director