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More Unlawful Cancellations of Oil & Natural Gas Leases in Bridger-Teton National Forest ^[1]

- *USDA attempts to cancel decade-old oil and natural gas leases in Wyoming*
- *Repeated pattern of federal government failing to honor property rights*
- *Unlawful decision comes on heels of rushing out Master Leasing Plans in Utah*

DENVER – [Western Energy Alliance](#) ^[2] issued the following statement on the announcement of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) regarding oil and natural gas leasing in the Bridger-Teton National Forest of Wyoming. The FSEIS is intended to result in the unlawful cancellation of 39,490 acres of leases sold by the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) in 2006.

“We are well aware that the Obama Administration is rushing to get as many job-killing regulations in as possible before its final expiration, but this retroactive cancellation of leases takes it a step further” said Kathleen Sgamma, president. “Not only is it another attempt to rewrite history, but the Agriculture Department isn’t even following basic procedures required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Because following regulation and the rule of law would mean the formal decision can’t be made until after January 20th, Undersecretary Robert Bonnie simply flourishes his pen and ignores both. The failure to follow regulation should make it easier for the Trump Administration to overturn this unlawful act.

“This latest retroactive cancellation of leases joins two other such actions in the White River National Forest of Colorado and the Badger-Two Medicine area of Montana. All these involve leases, which are property rights, sold a decade or more ago. Retroactively denying property rights long after those rights were granted is contrary to basic American jurisprudence.

“Also released last week was a Master Leasing Plan (MLP) for Moab and preliminary alternatives for the San Rafael Desert MLP. MLPs are the result of an unlawful executive action in 2010 with neither congressional authority nor an open, public rulemaking process. MLPs add yet another layer of NEPA analysis that’s intended to further delay or prevent responsible energy development in the West. This Administration accepts no bounds on its actions, and Western Energy Alliance looks forward to a return to the rule of law on January 20th. We are ready to work with the Trump Administration to create jobs and economic opportunities that have been prevented for eight long years.”

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