



December 22, 2014

Via email: blm_mt_miles_cityfo_lease_ea@blm.gov

Ms. Irma Nansel
Bureau of Land Management
Miles City Field Office
111 Garryowen Road
Miles City, Montana 59301-7000

RE: Western Energy Alliance Comments on the Documentation of NEPA Adequacy for the May 2015 Oil and Natural Gas Lease Sale

Dear Ms. Nansel:

Western Energy Alliance wishes to express its support for leasing the three nominated parcels in conformance with the existing land use plan for the May 6, 2015, lease sale. Exploration and production in Montana has played a significant role in making the U.S. the world's leading producer of oil and natural gas, and development on public lands is vital to that contribution.

Western Energy Alliance represents over 480 companies engaged in all aspects of environmentally responsible exploration and production of oil and natural gas in Montana and across the West. The Alliance represents independent producers, the majority of which are small businesses with an average of fifteen employees.

The Documentation of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) illustrates that there are several existing stipulations attached to each of the parcels to protect other resources, including cultural and paleontological resources, wildlife (including species protected under the Endangered Species Act and the Greater Sage-Grouse), visual resources, and steep slopes and soils. These existing stipulations are robust and sufficient to address other resource concerns.

Oil and natural gas development has proven to be a valuable economic driver for the nation, contributing significant revenues to federal, state, and local coffers, and providing thousands of well-paying jobs. These revenues are used to fund infrastructure, education, and other vital services for communities. In Montana, oil and natural gas exploration and production supports nearly 8,000 jobs with wages totaling over \$475 million, and contributes over \$2 billion in economic impact and over \$450 million in federal and state taxes.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment, and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Sincerely,



Brian J. Meinhart
Policy Analyst

Cc: The Honorable Steve Bullock, Governor, State of Montana
The Honorable Jon Tester, U.S. Senate
The Honorable John E. Walsh, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Steve Daines, U.S. House of Representatives
Roosevelt County Commission
Powder River County Commission