



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Montana/Dakotas State Office
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, Montana 59101
<http://www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas>



November 16, 2020

In Reply Refer To:
March 23, 2021 Comp Sale
3160 (MT92200)

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received Expressions of Interest to sell Federal oil and gas leases on 21 parcels of Federal minerals in a future lease sale. The purpose and need for action is to 1) respond to EOIs to lease parcels of land for oil and gas development as mandated by Federal laws, and 2) prevent substantial loss of oil and gas resources from Federal lands due to drainage, and ensure that Federal lessors are not subjected to revenue losses through drainage. Offering parcels for competitive oil and gas leasing provides opportunities for private individuals or companies to explore and develop federal oil and gas resources after receipt of necessary approvals, and to sell the oil and gas in public markets.

The proposed action is to lease 21 parcels within the Miles City Field Office, North Dakota Field Office, and Dakota Prairie Grasslands (USFS) areas. The BLM applied surface use stipulations to the parcels to avoid and minimize impacts to resources consistent with management decisions in the applicable Resource Management Plan (RMP). Those stipulations include, but are not limited to no surface occupancy in streams, riparian areas, and floodplains, controlled surface use for air, sensitive soils and paleontological resources, timing limitations to minimize impacts to special status species, raptors and waterfowl during critical time periods, and survey and consultation requirements for cultural resources and threatened/endangered species. The BLM prepared an Environmental Assessment to disclose the reasonably foreseeable effects of the March 2021 lease sale on five resource issues: Air Resources, Big Game (Pronghorn Antelope), Socio-economic Conditions, Greater Sage-Grouse, and Water Resources. The EA also discloses how stipulations avoid/minimize impacts to other resources such as, but not limited to, cultural and paleontological resources, recreation, and special status species. Additionally, in accordance with the August 5, 2020 Montana/Dakotas Instruction Memorandum No. MT-2020-018, the BLM completed a sage-grouse prioritization assessment consistent with 2015 Sage-Grouse Resource Management Plans and Montana District Court Order in Case 4:18-cv-00069-BMM (5/22/2020). Refer to the Lease Sale Prioritization Assessment and IM-MT-2020-018 available on the March 2021 Lease Sale project page on e-Planning for more information.

Public Involvement Opportunity

The Environmental Assessment and corresponding appendices are posted on the BLM ePlanning website for a 30-day comment period starting on November 24, 2020. Written comments must be postmarked by December 23, 2020 to be considered. Comments should be within the scope of the proposed action, specific to the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action and include supporting reasons for the BLM to consider. Issues identified from public comment may be used to modify or add project design features, mitigation, or alternatives.

Comments may be submitted using the following methods:

Electronic: BLM e-Planning website – <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/home>

-Use the “Text Search” tab with the below State/Office/Document Type/Fiscal Year -Click Search and select DOI-BLM-MT-0000-2021-0001-EA 2021 March Oil and Gas Lease Sale from the search result below.

-Click “Documents” on the left-hand side of the screen to display documents available for review.

-Click “Comment on Document” on the right-hand side of the screen to submit comments.

Mail: Bureau of Land Management
Montana/Dakotas State Office
Branch of Fluid Minerals
Attention: Christine Cimiluca
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, MT 59101

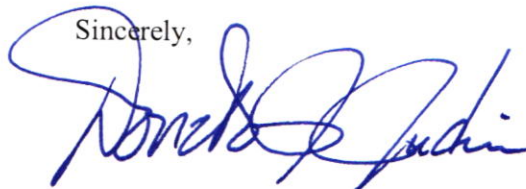
Email: ccimiluc@BLM.gov

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Prior to issuance of any leases, the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be finalized and posted for public review on our BLM e-Planning website. Please refer to the BLM e-Planning website at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/home>. Current and updated information about our EA, Lease Sale Notice, and corresponding information pertaining to this sale can be found at the link referenced above.

If you have any questions or would like more information about lease sale notices or the issuance of the EA, Decision Record and FONSI, please contact Christine Cimiluca, Natural Resource Specialist at (406) 896-5110.

Sincerely,



Donato J. Judice
Deputy State Director
Energy, Mineral & Realty
Bureau of Land Management
Interior Regions 5 & 9
Montana-Dakotas State Office