

PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
March 27, 2018**

OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE DEMANDS GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS WITH U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) ON HUGE WYOMING OIL AND GAS PROJECT

(Pine Ridge, S.D.) The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) developed and released a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Converse County Oil and Gas Project (CCOGP), a huge project located within Sioux 1851 Treaty territory in Wyoming. Release of the EIS set in motion a 45-day comment period that closed on March 12, 2018.

The BLM website states that the oil and gas companies (“Operator Group”) that will develop the CCOGP include Anadarko Petroleum Company, Chesapeake Energy Corporation, Devon Energy, EOG Resources, and SM Energy.

The Operator Group proposes to develop approximately 5,000 oil and natural gas wells on 1,500 new multi-well pads over a 10 year period within a 1.5 million acre project area. Mineral ownership in the project area consists of 54% held by the Federal Government and 46% being held by the State Government and private owners.

The Operator Group will use “directional, vertical, horizontal and other drilling techniques . . . to develop infrastructure to support oil and gas production in the project area including: well pads, roads, pipelines, power lines, compressor stations, electrical substations, and ancillary facilities such as water supply wells and water disposal facilities . . . have requested year-round drilling to protect wildlife species in the project area.”

According to BLM, the project “could unlock 1.37 billion barrels of oil and 5.79 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and create about 8,000 jobs over the 40-year life of the project.”

The Oglala Sioux Tribe responded to the draft EIS prior to the March 12th deadline, and voiced its concerns about air and water pollution that will directly impact the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation from flaring natural gas and from hydraulic fracking that will directly impact tribal water rights and fishing rights in the Cheyenne River. The Cheyenne River originates in Converse County, Wyoming upstream and borders the northwest portion of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation downstream, where the reservation boundary also extends to the middle channel of the river.

Tribal President Troy Scott Weston stated that “the Pine Ridge Reservation is located approximately 100 miles due west of the Converse County project area. The

Tribe is greatly concerned about natural gas flaring that will drift over the reservation and directly impact the health of reservation residents. These energy companies promise jobs in exchange for poisoning not only the air that we breathe, but also poisoning the water that we drink and depend on for agriculture, irrigation, fishing and hunting, and other uses with toxic contaminants used in hydraulic fracking.. It appears we have another DAPL type of project in the making that must be stopped.”

On March 21, 2018, James Red Willow, who serves as Fifth Member of the Tribal Executive Committee, got the Executive Committee to pass Executive Committee Resolution No. 18-55XB that requested “government-to-government consultations” with BLM and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on the draft EIS. The consultations are scheduled for April 17-18, 2018, at the Prairie Winds Casino Hotel Conference Room.

Red Willow stated “all the Sioux tribes must unite and voice our concerns on the draft EIS. We have an obligation to protect the next Seven Generation of our people from environmental harm to their persons and lives.”

Red Willow also stated that “we also have to protect our Sacred sites from desecration by energy companies. We have invited cultural resources expert Tim Mentz to make a power point presentation on how BLM is addressing Sioux sacred sites and cultural resources in the draft EIS.”

Arrangements are being made for discounted rates for tribal representatives that plan to attend the consultations with BLM.

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