



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### **PSC Approves Permit for New Coal Mine in Mercer County**

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) today approved a permit for a new coal mine located about 10 miles southwest of Beulah in Mercer County. This is the first major new mine permitted since the late 1970s.

The permit covers a little over 8,091 acres for the proposed Coyote Creek Mine. The mine is scheduled to begin delivering coal to the Coyote Power Station operated by Otter Tail Power in May 2016. Construction began at the mine's shop and office site earlier this year following the Commission's approval of a permit in March that covers 84 acres. The average annual coal production will be about 2.5 million tons per year with a projected first year production of 1.7 million tons.

“Despite the EPA’s war on this resource, coal is the cornerstone of an electric system that is both affordable and dependable,” said Commissioner Randy Christmann. “This long-term commitment will help our electric system and our economy in general for the next several decades.”

Coal will be mined from about 4,530 acres of the permit area. Much of the remaining area will be used for soil and overburden stockpiles, access and haul roads, and water management structures used in support of mining activities. Coal removal is expected to continue until 2040.

“Our mining and reclamation experts have completed an exhaustive, year-long review of the company’s plans for all aspects of this project with a special emphasis on minimizing impacts, avoiding the most sensitive areas, managing water and restoring land to its original integrity,” Commissioner Julie Fedorchak said. “As a result, today we are able to approve this permit for a new mine that will provide 125 full-time jobs and produce enough coal annually to generate reliable, affordable power for approximately 250,000 homes.”

The permit review process involved hundreds of hours of PSC staff time including experts on soils, rangelands, woodlands, hydrology and other technical areas. Multiple public notices and opportunities to comment were provided for any interested parties to offer input. No public comment was received.

Removal of federal coal is prohibited until Coyote Creek obtains the coal lease and the Secretary of the Interior approves the federal mine plan. There is one occupied farmstead and a road leading to the farmstead in the permit area, which Coyote Creek does not propose to disturb.

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities, telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, grain elevators, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or [www.psc.nd.gov](http://www.psc.nd.gov).

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