



United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources  
Conservation Service

December 15, 2014

PO Box 1458  
Bismarck, ND  
58502-1458  
Voice 701.530.2000  
Fax 855-813-7556

James Deutsch, Director  
Reclamation Division  
Public Service Commission  
State of North Dakota  
600 East Boulevard, Dept. 408  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0480

Dear Mr. Deutsch:

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has reviewed your letter dated October 28, 2014, concerning the review of the Coteau Properties Company Revision No. 18 to Surface Coal Mining Permit NACT-0201 for the Freedom Mine.

The Prime Farmland portions of Section 2.5 – Soils Resources have been reviewed by the NRCS. We offer the following comments:

- In Section 2.5.5 – Table 5 states that the Arnegard subsoil soil has pH of 11.75. If this pH is correct, the very strong alkaline subsoil of this Arnegard soils is not suitable for mixing with other subsoils, prime or nonprime.
- In section 2.5.3 – the map unit 31 – Makoti Silt Loam, 1 to 3% slopes is prime farmland and needs to be added to the list of “NRCS Prime Farmland Mapping Units” in Table 6 of Section 2.5.3.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. We look forward to working with the Public Service Commission in the future.

Sincerely,

WADE D. BOTT  
State Soil Scientist