



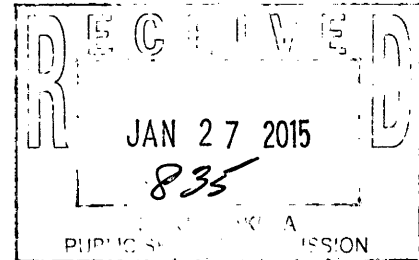
United States Department of the Interior



OFFICE OF SURFACE MINING
RECLAMATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Casper Area Office
PO Box 11018
150 East B Street, RM 1018
Casper, WY 82602

January 26, 2015



Mr. James Deutsch, Director
Reclamation & AML Divisions
North Dakota Public Service Commission
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Dear Mr. Deutsch:

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) has reviewed the AML Divisions request for concurrence for authorization to proceed on the 2015 Sinkhole Maintenance Project, located at several sights throughout North Dakota

This project is a continuation of the 2011 Sinkhole Maintenance Project. The environmental assessment for the 2011 Sinkhole Maintenance Project was conducted in August of 2011. Since the exact location of these sinkholes may not be known until they are reported by landowners, each site must be evaluated independently. As long as the scope of work and project locations remain consistent with those areas addressed by the environmental assessment conducted for the 2011 Sinkhole Maintenance Project, the authorization to proceed and finding of no significant impact issued for that project remain valid. However, if the scope of work or project locations change for any reason, please contact this office as further evaluation and authorization may be required.

We have determined that the documentation previously supplied for 2011 Sinkhole Maintenance Project adequately discusses the environmental issues and impacts associated with the project. Based on the analysis of these documents, I have determined that reclamation of sites that maintain the same scope of work and locations as the 2011 Sinkhole Maintenance Project would not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment, and therefore conclude that no environmental impact statement (EIS) is necessary.

The State of North Dakota Public Service Commission, Abandoned Mine Lands Division should ensure that all applicable laws, clearances, permits, or requirements are met prior to expending funds.

Accordingly, pursuant to section 5-11-20D.3 of the Federal Assistance manual, this office concurs that you are authorized to proceed with this project.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Fleischman, Chief
Denver Field Division