



File Code: 1570
Date: August 11, 2021

Dear Objectors:

This letter is in response to your objections filed on the Tendoy Oil and Gas Environmental Assessment and draft Decision Notice released by Jamie Tripp, District Ranger of the Dillon Ranger District. I have read your objections and reviewed the project record. My review of your objections was conducted in accordance with the administrative review procedures found at 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and B.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS

The regulations provide for a pre-decisional administrative review process of issues raised by objectors and suggested remedies that would resolve the objections. I considered issues related to climate change, the National Environmental Policy Act, bonding requirements, recreation, watershed, fisheries, and wildlife.

OBJECTION RESOLUTION MEETING

I conducted a virtual resolution meeting on August 6, 2021 to discuss possible remedies to objections. Three objectors attended the meeting:

- Guy Alsentzer, Upper Missouri Water Keeper,
- Aubrey Bertram, Wild Montana,
- Corey Fischer, Trout Unlimited and lead objector for Montana Wildlife Federation and Helena Hunters and Anglers.

I appreciate the dialogue that ensued between objectors, members of the interdisciplinary team, the responsible official, and myself. We discussed project-specific protection measures and were able to clarify several aspects of the proposed action. Objections related to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) authorities were discussed and deferred to the BLM. A number of items related specifically to Forest Service authority and surface use were agreed to as follows:

- The responsible official worked with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to extend the big game winter range stipulation to end July 1 instead of May 15. This extension will be added to the Conditions of Approval (COA). The responsible official will review the draft COA and incorporate, as appropriate, BMPs suggested by the objectors that address sedimentation points and storm water runoff for Little Sheep Creek.
- Draft COAs will be provided to objectors for review prior to them being incorporated into the final decision notice.
- The responsible official will continue to work with the BLM on the concerns related to Bonding amounts, the Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan, and other items not specifically related to surface use as they are under their authority of the BLM.



- Objectors requested additional information from the team botanist about revegetation requirements (i.e. native seed) for reclaimed areas. This information will be provided.
- It was clarified to objectors that the proposed action is for a single non-hydraulic fractured exploratory well that could go into production. If additional wells are requested a new environmental analysis would be required. This will be made clear in the decision documents.

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

As specified at 36 CFR 218.11(b), this letter is my response to your objections to the environmental assessment, draft decision notice and, project record. The responsible official provided adequate analysis of issues raised and provided acceptable documentation of compliance with applicable law, regulation, and policy.

CONCLUSION

After incorporating agreements made during the resolution meeting and providing the COAs for review and incorporating those into the final decision notice, the responsible official may sign the decision notice for this project. My review constitutes the final administrative determination of the United States Department of Agriculture; no further review from any other Forest Service or United States Department of Agriculture official of my written response to your objection is available [36 CFR 218.11(b)(2)]. Sincerely,

CHERI A. FORD
Forest Supervisor

cc: Evan Burks, Licette Hammer, Alex Dunn, Olga Troxel, Cody Hutchinson