

**Alton Coal Tract LBA
Kane County, Utah
Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

Lead Agency: U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management

Type of Action: Draft (X) Final ()
 Administrative () Legislative ()

Jurisdiction: Color Country District Office, Kanab Field Office, Utah

Abstract: This draft environmental impact statement (Draft EIS) analyzes and discloses the potential environmental effects of leasing and mining the coal reserves in the Alton Coal Lease by Application (LBA) Tract encompassing approximately 3,576 acres of land in Kane County near the town of Alton. The Draft EIS was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in response to Alton Coal Development's LBA for federal coal, which would be recovered using primarily surface-mining methods.

The Proposed Action would include approximately 3,576 acres, of which approximately 2,280 acres are federal surface and mineral estate and 1,296 acres are split estate; private surface estate and federal mineral estate. Recoverable portions of in-place coal reserves would be mined over approximately 25 years using surface-mining methods where the depth of overburden is approximately 200 to 300 feet, and using underground methods where the depth of overburden exceeds approximately 200 to 300 feet. The choice of mining method, however, could vary from the 200- to 300-foot overburden threshold depending on the coal thickness, overburden type, overburden (highwall) stability, underground mining techniques available, operating and capital costs, and coal market economics. Approximately 2 million tons of coal per year would be mined once topsoil stockpiling and initial overburden removal has occurred. Reclamation would be concurrent with mining over the course of the estimated 25-year mine life and would be followed by a potential 10-year reclamation and revegetation monitoring period. The proposed Alton Coal Tract would include centralized and dispersed facilities and the relocation of KFO Route 116. Under the Proposed Action, the tract would be offered for lease at a sealed-bid, competitive lease sale, subject to standard and special lease stipulations developed for the tract.

The Draft EIS also analyzes a No Action Alternative (as required by the National Environmental Policy Act) that would not authorize the leasing of the tract, and one action alternative to the Proposed Action. Under the action alternative (Alternative C), the Alton Coal Tract would be modified to exclude a portion of the tract located near the town of Alton. Further, certain mining activities in the southern portion of the tract would be subject to seasonal restrictions to reduce impacts to the local Greater Sage-grouse population. Under Alternative C, the modified tract would be offered for lease at a sealed-bid, competitive lease sale, subject to standard and special lease stipulations developed for the tract.

Five open houses will be held in Alton, Kanab, Panguitch, Cedar City, and Salt Lake City, Utah. The public meetings will be announced by the BLM at least 15 days in advance through public notices and local media news releases and mailings. The purpose of these meetings is to provide information on the proposed coal lease tract and to collect public comment on the adequacy and accuracy of the analysis in the Draft EIS. There will also be a formal public hearing held on December 6, 2011 at 6:00 PM at the Festival Hall Convention Center, 96 North Main, Cedar City, UT. The purpose of the hearing is to receive comments on the proposed coal lease, on the fair market value, and on the maximum economic recovery of the federal coal resources in the tract. Comments will be accepted

until January 6, 2012 for use in development of the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted to Alton Coal Tract LBA EIS, Keith Rigrup, BLM, Kanab Field Office, 318 North 100 East, Kanab, Utah 84741, or sent to UT_Kanab_Altoncoal@blm.gov. Comments may also be faxed to (435) 644-4620. For information about the proposed coal lease tract or to view the Draft EIS, visit http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/prog/energy/coal/alton_coal_project.html.