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TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

Utah Coal Regulatory Program

January 6, 2012

TO: Internal File

THRU: Priscilla Burton, Team Lead *PWB my SAS*

FROM: Ken Hoffman, Hydrogeologist *KH*

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Alton Coal Development, LLC, Coal Hollow Mine, C/025/0005, Task ID # 3949

SUMMARY:

The U S Department of the Interior / Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared and forwarded a **DRAFT** environmental impact statement (DEIS) relative to the Alton Coal Tract Lease By Application (LBA). The document analyzes and discloses the potential impacts of leasing and mining the coal from the Alton LBA. The DEIS analyzes environmental impacts based on three different scenarios: Alternative A - a no action alternative (no lease awarded); Alternative B - lease of entire tract containing 3,581 surface acres and 44.9-49.1 million tons of recoverable coal reserves translating to a 25-year life of mine. Alternative C- is a reduced acreage tract eliminating the northwest corridor closest to the town of Alton. This tract represents 3,173 surface acres and 38.1-42.3 million tons of recoverable coal reserves translating to a 21-year life of mine. The public comment period ends on January 6, 2012 where all the comments of a substantive nature will be reviewed by the BLM in preparation of the Final EIS due out in September-October 2012.

This review primarily focuses on the water resources identified in Chapter 3.16 and the possible environmental impacts to these resources presented in Chapter 4.16.

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The following comments address sections in the DEIS as they are referenced in the section headers of the document.

1.8.1.1.2 Application of Unsuitability Criteria

Section 1.8.1.1.2 states “All potential AVFs (57 acres) present on the tract occur in the no-coal zone...and would not be directly affected by pit disturbance.” Utah Administrative Code R645-301-731.120 requires the protection of hydrologic balance of surface water from coal mining. DOGM is concerned about the protection of the hydrologic balance in the northern section of the proposed action configuration due to the close proximity of pit disturbance to AVF and Kanab Creek shown on Map 3.17. Specifically, DOGM is concerned that the minimum 100 feet stream buffer zone required by Utah Administrative Code R645-301-731.610 maybe inadequate to fully protect the hydrologic balance of Kanab Creek. The DEIS should evaluate the depth of pit disturbance in relation to the angle of draw to necessary to support the protection of the hydrologic balance of Kanab Creek. The DEIS should also consider if measures such as surface barriers will be required to fully protect Kanab Creek. This adjustment should be included in lease stipulations as it may impact the amount of maximum recoverable reserves.

Table 2.3 Regulatory Compliance or Mitigation Required by Federal, State, or Local Law and Stipulations

Table 2.3 of the draft EIS states for wetlands under Federal, State, and Local Requirements “Identify jurisdictional wetlands (USACE)” will be required. In addition, the table should state wetlands may require a ground water management plan and USACE permit to disturb.

3.16.1.4 Surface-Water Quality

The text states that Table 3.31 is “a summary of current (2005-2010) water quality data for streams...were obtained for eight sites in or near the tract from DOGM water-quality database (DOGM 2008b).” The reference section DOGM 2008b states “Accessed September 8, 2008.” These items appear to contradict themselves as the table cannot include 2010 data if it was accessed in 2008. DOGM recommends Table 3.31 and/or DOGM 2008b reference be updated to include all current data.

Map 3.17. Potential wetlands, floodplains, and probable AVFs, in addition to the AVF study area, in relation to the Alton Coal Tract.

Map 3.17 references the AVF Study Area conducted in Appendix E *Reconnaissance Alluvial Valley Floor Investigation in the Alton Coal Tract LBA and Adjacent Areas, Kane County, Utah* this Map should be updated to included AVF evaluation for the entire proposed action configuration. i.e. Robinson Creek north and east of the existing coal mine.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

The above comments should be submitted during the BLM's public comment period ending on January 27, 2012.

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