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State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Division of Oil, Gas and Mining

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August 31, 2015

Mr. Mike Domeier
Utah State Soil Scientist
Natural Resource Conservation Service
Wallace F. Bennett Bldg
125 S State Street
Salt Lake City UT 84138-1100

RECEIVED
SEP 08 2015
DIV. OF OIL, GAS & MINING

Dear Mr. Domeier:

RE: Prime Farmland Compliance North Lease Task 4942. Coal Hollow Mine (C/025/0005) North Private Lease Parcel, Kane County, Utah.

The Utah Division of Oil Gas & Mining (Division) has received an application from Alton Coal Development, LLC (ACD) to add 296 acres of land to the Coal Hollow surface mine permit area.

I understand from the application that a prime farmland determination was made for 292 acres within the proposed permit area (letter to Larry Johnson, ACD, dated December 5, 2012). Since that time, Long Resource Consultants, Inc (Bob Long) conducted an Order II soil survey of the proposed permit area. He cites several conversations with you in 2014. So you are likely familiar with the project and the area.

The Utah R645 Coal Rules have specified that the Secretary of Agriculture through the Utah NRCS State Conservationist is the primary authority for determining the requirements of the soil survey, the soil salvage and reconstruction plan, and the soil productivity monitoring after reclamation (R645-302-315.300). Prior to approval of a mining permit on prime farmlands, the Division is required to consult with the NRCS and obtain their review and comment on the details of the proposed mining and reclamation plan. Please refer to Utah Coal Rules R645-302-314 through R645-302-317.628.2 for the requirements of permitting surface disturbance in prime farmland. R645-302-317.200, R645-302-316.622 and R645-302-317.628 outline the responsibility of our agencies.

I have put the North Lease application on a CD and enclosed it with this letter. The redline/strikeout information in each chapter indicates the changes being made to the existing Mining and Reclamation Plan. Chapter 2 covers the soils handling: salvage, stockpiling, redistribution, and reclamation. Chapter 3 contains vegetation, fish and wildlife information. Chapter 4 contains pre- and post-mining land use information. Chapter 5, engineering, describes the operations and reclamation process. Chapter 6 provides geologic information. Chapter 7 is hydrology. Chapter 8 is bonding. Volume 11 is the Order II Soils Survey, pedon descriptions, analytical results, photographs and mapping. Volume 12 is the Vegetation report including productivity information. In addition to the maps in Vol. 11 and Vol. 12, you will want to look at Dwg. 2-3 Soil Survey; Dwg. 2-4 Soils Handling; Dwg. 5-50, 5-51, and 5-55 for overburden and coal removal sequence; Dwg. 5-71 and 5-72 post mining topography; and Dwg. 5-73 for Reclamation sequence.



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Prime Farmland Compliance

In a nutshell, the Order II survey reduced the prime farmland and farmlands of statewide importance down to 186 acres. The permit area was then reduced in size to the area shown on Drawing 5-50. Within the new boundary, Drawing 2-3 shows 38.19 acres of prime farmland to be affected, but does not label the approximately 50 acres of farmland of statewide importance. The prime/statewide farmlands in the permit area are alfalfa/grass pasturelands with productivity of 1,200 lbs/ac. Where these prime farmlands will be disturbed, soils will be salvaged separately for each landowner. The A horizon (0.7 ft) will be salvaged separately from the B/C horizon (3.3 ft.). The A and B/C horizons will be returned in order (similar to non-prime farmland). The prime farmland soils will be monitored for density of the surface 12 inches with each horizon re-distributed. The prime farmlands will be returned to pastureland at final reclamation. After reclamation, they will be monitored for productivity. Farmlands of statewide importance will not be salvaged by horizon: 0.5 to 1.2 ft will be removed as the topsoil and the remainder down to four feet will be salvaged as subsoil. Farmlands of statewide importance will not be monitored for density or productivity.

There is a lot of information to review, but this review process will likely take another month or two. Division staff have reviewed the plan for the first time and are returning it to ACD this week, with a list of changes to be made in order to meet the requirements of the Utah R645 Coal Mining Rules. On the CD, I have included the Division's list of deficiencies (information required to meet the requirements of the Utah R645 Coal Mining Rules). Soil handling and prime farmland deficiencies are followed by P.Burton. After you've had a chance to review the application, I would appreciate an opportunity to discuss it with you.

Please call me at (435) 613-3733 or email me at priscillaburton@utah.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Priscilla Burton, CPSSc
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PWB

Enclosure

cc: Daron Haddock, DOGM/SLC, w/o