



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
316 North 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
Billings, Montana 59101



IN REPLY REFER TO: Environmental, Safety and Cultural Resources Management-620

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the State of Montana, Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), as joint lead agencies, have prepared this Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to document and disclose the results of an environmental analysis. The EIS analyzes the anticipated impacts associated with an application received by the BIA to lease a tract of Indian owned coal, the Absaloka Mine South Extension, to Westmoreland Resources Inc. (WRI) for the continuation of mining at the Absaloka Mine on the Crow Indian Reservation, and allows the MDEQ to evaluate impacts associated with Absaloka Mine's proposed Tract III Revision. This document was prepared in cooperation with the Crow Tribe, Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These agencies/entities also have decision-making authority independent of the BIA and MDEQ and are entities from which WRI will obtain separate approvals or permits. The Record of Decision (ROD) associated with this EIS is also available to the reader. The decision was made to select the Proposed Action as described in the EIS. This alternative is the approval of WRI's Indian Mineral Development Act (IMDA) lease with the Crow Tribe for the South Extension tract and approval of all surface use agreements between WRI and the allottee surface owners in the South Extension. A copy of these documents is provided for your review. The Draft and Final EIS, as well as the ROD may also be reviewed via the Internet at [www.deq.mt.gov](http://www.deq.mt.gov). Copies of the Draft and Final EIS, as well as the ROD are also available for public inspection at:

Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Weaver Drive, Bldg. 2  
Crow Agency, MT 59022

Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
316 N. 26<sup>th</sup> St. (room 4433)  
Billings, MT 59101

Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Industrial and Energy Minerals Bureau  
1520 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations codified at 40 CFR 1506.10 (b), concurrent publication regarding availability of the Final EIS and ROD regarding the selection of a preferred alternative will be published in the *Federal Register* by the BIA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The ROD associated with this analysis and the approval of **the** IMDA lease between the Crow Tribe and WRI for the in-trust coal, and approval of all surface use agreements between WRI and the allottee surface owners in the South Extension tract for the continuation of mining at the Absaloka Mine on the Crow Indian Reservation, **may be** appealed. Appeal procedures are contained in the ROD for this analysis, or can be found at 25 Code of Federal Regulations Part 2. Further information can be obtained by contacting Rick Stefanic at 406/247-7911. Copies of the Final EIS and BIA's ROD will be mailed to parties on the distribution list and others who commented on this EIS during the National Environmental Policy Act compliance.

This EIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Montana Environmental Policy Act, as well as applicable regulations and other statutes, to address possible environmental and socioeconomic impacts that could result from this proposal/project. This Final EIS is not a decision document. Its purpose is to inform the public and agency decision makers of the impacts of leasing the Crow Indian coal for the extension of mining at the Absaloka Mine and to evaluate alternatives to this leasing.

If you have any questions or would like additional copies of this Final EIS, please contact Mr. Stefanic at 406/247-7911.

Sincerely,



Edward Parisian  
Director, Rocky Mountain Region