



BLACKFEET NATION

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Iloff "Scott" Kipp, Sr., Vice-Chairman
Tyson T. Running Wolf, Secretary
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BLACKFEET TRIBAL BUSINESS COUNCIL

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Forrestina Calf Boss Ribs
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William "Bill" Old Chief
Iloff "Scott" Kipp, Sr.
Cheryl Lynn Little Dog

October 24, 2014

Sally Jewell, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Tom Vilsack, Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Jewell and Secretary Vilsack:

The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, representing the Blackfeet people, respectfully requests that the U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture utilize their statutory authority to cancel all oil and gas leases in the Badger-Two Medicine area adjacent to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

These leases were granted illegally in 1982, without Tribal consultation, without review of significant cultural values, and without a required Environmental Impact Statement. The leases were granted in direct violation of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act, failures that provide the basis for our immediate cancelation request.

Since the time when those leases were granted in error, the 165,588-acre Badger-Two Medicine has been declared a Traditional Cultural District, under the National Register of Historic Places. This designation recognizes the Blackfeet people's deep cultural connection to this profoundly spiritual region, which is home to our most sacred origins. In addition, the U.S. federal government has since recognized the critical cultural and ecological values of the region, placing it off-limits to motorized use or any further leasing. Many oil and gas developers have likewise acknowledged the unique and pristine nature of the Badger-Two Medicine, and have relinquished their leases in the area. These actions come on the heels of a century of protective designations –

Glacier National Park in 1910, the Sun River Game Preserve in 1913, the Bob Marshall Wilderness in 1964 – making the 1982 lease approvals a dramatic, glaring and wholly inappropriate inconsistency in the history of this landscape.

Yet of the 47 leases granted illegally in 1982, 18 remain active -- with one company (Solenex) filing suit in U.S. District Court, Washington DC, to allow its Application to Drill to proceed to development.

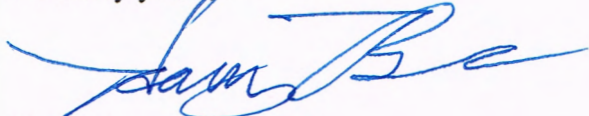
Should this company prevail, any short-term private-industry profit from energy development will irrevocably change the Blackfeet's ancient right to the natural capacity, power and ability of the land, including its plants, animals and the region's pristine and isolated nature. Extensive studies conducted by the University of Arizona and our Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office have revealed that areas to the north of the Badger-Two Medicine have become spiritually sterilized as the result of development.

The loss of cultural connections to primary religious lands is a concern for all American Indian Tribes, as evidenced by proclamations on behalf of Badger-Two Medicine protections signed by the entire Blackfoot Confederacy and all Tribal Nations in Montana and Wyoming.

The Departments of Interior and Agriculture clearly have not just the moral obligation but also the legal authority to cancel all existing leases in the Badger-Two Medicine area. The Interior Department already has exercised this lease-cancellation authority including the 2009 cancelation of leases on Colorado's White River National Forest due to fundamental NEPA violations.

We respectfully request that you and your staff meet directly with representatives of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council regarding the Badger-Two Medicine, oil and gas leases, and long-term co-management strategies for permanent protection of this most sacred mountain land.

Sincerely yours,



Harry Barnes, Chairman
Blackfeet Tribal Business Council



Tyson T. Running Wolf, Secretary
Blackfeet Tribal Business Council

Attachments:

- Proclamation by Blackfoot Confederacy
- Proclamation by Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council
- Map of Conservation Status of Lands Surrounding Glacier National Park
- Oct. 3, 2014, Legal Position Paper
- Badger-Two Medicine Traditional Cultural District Summary and Overview
- Badger-Two Medicine Overview Map Showing Leases in the Badger-Two Medicine
- Issue Summary and Map Showing Solenex (Longwell) Lease Location
- Photo of Badger-Two Medicine