

## **Forest Service Violates Public Trust by allowing Stanley Energy to Corrupt the Wyoming Range NEPA Analysis**

### **Background**

- In 2005 and 2006, the Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) issued for sale oil and gas leases on 44,700 acres in the Wyoming Range. (10 companies bid on these.)
- These leases were protested and appealed and “stays” were issued, suspending them.
- Interior Board of Land Appeals ruled the BTNF’s analysis under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) was inadequate; Forest Service could upon further analysis cancel the leases outright.
- January 2008, BTNF announced that it would conduct a new NEPA analysis for the acreage to determine if it would authorize or cancel the contested leases.

### **Revealed --Forest Service Favors One Special Interest**

- April 22, Governor’s office revealed that the Forest Service had signed a memorandum of agreement (MOU) with Stanley Energy (one of the 10 companies) on October 17, 2007.
- MOU outlines how the Forest Service will conduct the NEPA analysis in conjunction with Stanley, giving Stanley these privileges within the agency’s process:
  - Say in selection of contractor to conduct analysis & scope of work
  - Say in defining timelines of the process & alternatives included
  - Special opportunity to respond to public comments and review all public comments
  - Correspondence between Stanley and the Forest Service to remain private
- Stanley pays for the contractor’s services to prepare the Forest Service’s analysis.
- Meetings regarding NEPA process were conducted in the offices of Holland and Hart, attorneys for Stanley. They have been trying to direct the work of the contractor, including air quality analysis process.

### **Violation of Public Trust**

- Forest Service has given a private company unprecedented influence in defining the timeline, direction and scope of agency analysis that can benefit the company’s financial interests.
- Flagrant conflict of interest that violates the agency’s public responsibility for impartiality and fairness. “...Stanley has purchased a favorable outcome,” stated Governor.
- Entire NEPA process for leasing decision is tainted, due to these violations of the federal government’s code of ethical conduct requiring impartiality and no conflicts of interest.
- Stanley Energy should not be at the table with the Forest Service any more than any other member of the public and certainly not directing the course of this analysis in any way.

### **A Slap in the Face to the Wyoming Public**

- Forest Service’s MOU shows disrespect for the public of Wyoming. Thousands of residents have participated in agency processes, submitted comments and followed the recognized path of public decision-making regarding leasing in the Wyoming Range.
- Public trust w/ Forest Service has been betrayed – they’ve given one company a special influential role.
- Why should the public participate, when the process has been corrupted? Public loses faith that comments matter, when it appears the process is rigged to benefit one special interest & outcome.

### **Call a Halt to this Charade – Bring Back Good Government**

Please contact Senators Barrasso and Enzi and ask them to tell the Forest Service:

- Cancel the MOU between Stanley Energy and the Forest Service.
- Cancel the current EIS leasing process—it is tainted. Even if Stanley’s participation is restricted in the future, that’s not good enough. This company’s involvement to date has had an undue influence that can’t be remedied. If the Forest Service wants to move forward, the process must start over fresh.
- Cancel any further industry payment for government analysis in a process that benefits the company. To assure objectivity, the Forest Service must cover the costs.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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