C O N F I D E N T I A L

WEEKLY HOT ISSUES REPORT for RA/DRA Region 8

Week ending February 23, 2018

OFFICE OF ECOSYSTEMS PROTECTION AND REMEDIATION

No report

OFFICE OF ENFORCEMENT, COMPLIANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

HOT ISSUES AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

ECEJ and OWP are Issuing a Joint Underground Injection Control (UIC) Letter to Enforcement/Investigatory / Ex. 7(a)

Enforcement/Investigatory / Ex. 7(a)

- ECEJ Contacts: Gary Wang, 312-6469; Management Contact: Tiffany Cantor, 312-6521
- OWP Contacts: Craig Boomgaard, 312-6794; Management Contact: Douglas Minter, 312-6079

Cross-Agency Uinta Basin Aerial Infra-Red (IR) Camera Survey Project - Projected start on 2/26/18

Key Message: A cross-agency team of BLM, Utah Division of Air Quality, Ute Tribe Air Program and EPA R8 have been working together to define, fund and implement a project to survey a large area of the Uinta Basin (UB) to learn about the prevalence and attributes of unintentional emissions from oil & gas well-pads. The projected start date for the helicopter flyover is 2/26/28 and will take about three weeks.

- BLM provided $90k, UDAQ $30k and EPA $25k for a total of $145k which covers Utah State University (USU) to manage this project and three weeks of helicopter flyover covering ~half of oil & gas wells in UB.
- The Ute Tribe Business Committee recently passed a Tribal Resolution approving this project.
- USU led an informational meeting to operators in Vernal and by webinar on 2/14/18. BLM provided introductory remarks on the importance of this research and USU presented the project approach, the role operators will play, and addressed questions.
- WEA sent a letter on 2/21/18 asking about flight logistics and the blinding of information collected to strip out identifying information. The steering committee (BLM, UDAQ, Ute Tribe and EPA) is currently discuss how to address the WEA letter.
- Technical Contact: Cindy Beeler, 312-6204; Management Contact: Scott Patefield, 312-6248

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OFFICE OF PARTNERSHIPS AND REGULATORY ASSISTANCE
No report

OFFICE OF TECHNICAL AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES
No report

OFFICE OF WATER PROTECTION

HOT ISSUES AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

Montana State Legislative Staff Requested Information about the NPDES Program
Key Message: A performance auditor with the Montana Legislative Audit Division contacted the Wastewater Unit on February 21 inquiring about NPDES program performance measures.

- The MTDEQ NPDES program has been selected for a state audit.
- The auditor inquired about the cause of permit backlogs in state programs generally; we explained that resources can be the issue.
- We discussed the lack of a workload model, the varying complexity of NPDES permits and EPA's NPDES permit Lean efforts.
- We responded by email to the auditor's questions about the priority permit selection process and the permit backlog measure.
- We informed the Chief of the MTDEQ NPDES of the call.
- Contact: Colleen Rathbone, 312-6133

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