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The Morning Star

**NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE  
ADMINISTRATION**

P.O. Box 128  
LAME DEER, MONTANA 59043  
(406) 477-6284  
FAX (406) 477-6210



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**Press Release: The Northern Cheyenne Tribe Challenges Trump Administration's Decision to Lift  
Moratorium on Federal Coal Leasing**

Contact: L. Jace Killsback, President, Northern Cheyenne Tribe, (406) 671-8340

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe plans to file a lawsuit today challenging the Trump Administration's decision to open federal lands, including lands near the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, for coal leasing. The Administration's decision was made without consulting with the Tribe's leaders and without analyzing the potential cultural, environmental, and socioeconomic impacts that the coal leasing program could have on the Tribe, its members, and its lands.

The lawsuit will challenge the decision by President Trump's newly-appointed Secretary of the Interior to lift a moratorium on the leasing of federal coal. The moratorium was put in place to allow the Department of the Interior to conduct a program-wide evaluation of coal leasing federal lands that would have included evaluation of impacts to the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and other affected tribal nations.

The President of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, L. Jace Killsback, said "it is alarming and unacceptable for the United States, which has a solemn obligation as the Northern Cheyenne's trustee, to sign up for many decades of harmful coal mining near and around our homeland without first consulting with our Nation or evaluating the impacts to our Reservation and our residents."

The Tribe is likely to bear the brunt of the decision to resume coal leasing. Approximately 426 million tons of coal encompassed by the program are located near the Northern Cheyenne Reservation at the Decker and Spring Creek mines in Montana.

"The Nation is concerned that coal mining near the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation will impact our pristine air and water quality, will adversely affect our sacred cultural properties and traditional spiritual practices, and will ultimately destroy the traditional way of life that the Nation has fought to preserve for centuries," President Killsback said. He added that "the Northern Cheyenne rarely shares in the economic benefits to the region generated by coal industry and other energy development projects" and that "a thorough review of the coal leasing program is critical to understanding the full economic, environmental, and health impacts of the program on the Nation."

The Tribe submitted a request to the Secretary of the Interior for formal government-to-government consultation prior to the decision lifting the coal leasing moratorium but did not receive a response. As a result, the Tribe has no alternative but to go to federal court to protect its rights and interests threatened by the resumption of the coal leasing program.

**LITTLE WOLF AND MORNING STAR – Out of defeat and exile they led us back to  
Montana and won our Cheyenne homeland that we will keep forever.**