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**WASHINGTON** – Today, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke signed two secretarial orders to advance American energy independence. The Secretary's orders foster responsible development of coal, oil, gas, and renewable energy on federal and Tribal lands and initiate review of agency actions directed by President Trump's executive order entitled "Promoting Energy Independence and Economic Growth." Secretary Zinke also signed a charter establishing a Royalty Policy Committee to ensure the public receives the full value of natural resources produced from federal lands. In signing the historic actions on energy independence, Secretary Zinke was joined by Members of Congress from western states and other stakeholders.

"Today I took action to sign a series of directives that put America on track to achieve the President's vision for energy independence and bringing jobs back to communities across the country" said Secretary Zinke. "American energy powers our national and local economies. But for too many local communities, energy on public lands has been more of a missed opportunity and has failed to include local consultation and partnership. Today's orders allow for Americans to benefit from safe and environmentally responsible development on federal lands and put America on track for energy independence."

Secretarial Order 3348 overturns the 2016 moratorium on all new coal leases on federal land and ends the programmatic environmental impacts statement that was set to be completed no sooner than 2019. Based upon the Department's review of Secretarial Order 3338, the order notes that, "the public interest is not served by halting the federal coal program for an extended time, nor is a PEIS required to consider potential improvements to the program." The order notes that the federal coal leasing program supplies approximately 40 percent of the coal produced in the United States and is critically important to the U.S. economy.

Secretarial Order 3349 implements review of agency actions directed by the President's Executive Order signed yesterday on energy independence. It also directs a reexamination of the mitigation and climate change policies and guidance across the Department of the Interior in order to better balance conservation strategies and policies with the equally legitimate need of creating jobs for hardworking American families. In particular, the order sets a timetable for review of agency actions that may hamper responsible energy development and reconsideration of regulations related to U.S. oil and natural gas development.

In an effort to ensure the public continues to receive the full value of natural resources produced on federal lands, Secretary Zinke also signed a charter establishing a Royalty Policy Committee to provide regular advice to the Secretary on the fair market value of and collection of revenues from Federal and Indian mineral and energy leases, include renewable energy sources. The Committee may also advise on the potential impacts of proposed policies and regulations related to revenue collection from such development, including whether a need exists for regulatory reform. The group will consist of up to 28 local, Tribal, state, and other stakeholders and will serve in an advisory role.

Secretary Zinke added that, "It's important that taxpayers get the full value of traditional and renewable

energy produced on public lands and that we ensure companies conduct environmental reviews under NEPA and have reclamation plans."

Secretary Zinke issued the following statement regarding the President's executive order on energy independence:

"American energy production benefits the economy, the environment, and national security. First, it’s better for the environment that the U.S. produces energy. Thanks to advancements in drilling and mining technology, we can responsibly develop our energy resources and return the land to equal or better quality than it was before. I’ve spent a lot of time in the Middle East, and I can tell you with 100 percent certainty it is better to develop our energy here under reasonable regulations and export it to our allies, rather than have it produced overseas under little or no regulations. Second, energy production is an absolute boon to the economy, supporting more than 6.4 million jobs and supplying affordable power for manufacturing, home heating, and transportation needs. In many communities coal jobs are the only jobs. Former Chairman Old Coyote of the Crow Tribe in my home state of Montana said it best, 'there are no jobs like coal jobs.' I hope to return those jobs to the Crow people. And lastly, achieving American energy independence will strengthen our national security by reducing our reliance on foreign oil and allowing us to assist our allies with their energy needs. As a military commander, I saw how the power of the American economy and American energy defeated our adversaries around the world. We can do it again to keep Americans safe."

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