

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

April 3, 2003

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EMS TRANSMISSION 04/04/2003
Instruction Memorandum No. 2003-137
Expires: 09/30/2004

To: All State Directors

From: Director

Subject: Integration of the EPCA Inventory Results into Land Use Planning and Energy Use Authorizations

Program Areas: Fluid Minerals, Land Use Planning

Purpose: The purpose for issuing this memorandum is threefold: (1) to state my commitment to providing responsible access to the public lands for all energy exploration and development; (2) to outline a strategy for integrating the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) inventory results into land use planning and energy use authorizations; and (3) to enumerate the driving principles for the successful and timely implementation of this effort.

Background: On January 16, 2003, the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management delivered to Congress an inventory of U.S. oil and gas resources in five western basins, as well as the extent and nature of any restrictions or impediments to their development. This interagency scientific inventory was prepared at the request of Congress under the provisions of the 2000 Energy Policy and Conservation Act.

In his National Energy Policy, President Bush directed the Secretary to "...examine land status and lease stipulation impediments to federal oil and gas leasing, and review and modify those where opportunities exist (consistent with the law, good environmental practice and balanced use of other resources)." This direction was incorporated as one of the major tasks in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Implementation Plan for the National Energy Policy, and is being tracked by the Department's Management by Objectives (MBO) with a deadline of May 30, 2003, for developing an implementation strategy and guidance for using the EPCA inventory results.

On March 5 and 6, 2003, at my direction, you or your representatives met in Denver, CO to develop a strategic plan for the integration of EPCA into BLM's land use planning and use authorization programs. That plan forms the basis for this instruction memorandum.

Policy/Action: As we implement the strategy developed at the Denver meeting, it is important we keep in mind a balanced, scientifically sound and wise approach to enhance our land stewardship responsibilities. Accordingly, I have listed below four principles that can improve our land use practices. As we proceed with these principles, it is my desire that we do not unduly restrict access and availability of the public land for its energy resources, and that we manage all resources to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

EPCA Integration Principles

1. Environmental protection and energy production are both desirable and necessary objectives of sound land management practices and are not to be considered mutually exclusive priorities;
2. The BLM must ensure the appropriate amount of accessibility to the energy resources necessary for the nation's security while recognizing that special and unique non-energy resources can be preserved;
3. Sound planning will weigh the relative resources values consistent with The Federal Land Policy and Management Act;
4. All resource impacts, including those associated with energy development and transmission, will be mitigated to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation.

EPCA Integration Strategy

1. A Land Use Planning Team has been established to follow up on concepts and ideas developed at the State Directors' Meeting for the Integration of Energy Policy Conservation Act. The team is sponsored by Ron Wenker (State Director-Colorado) and includes Sherri Thompson (Colorado- Team Lead), Richard Watson (WO-310), Holly Roberts (Utah), Scott Florence (WO-200) and other members as required. In the short term, the team will be responsible for developing an IM which will guide the Bureau in integrating EPCA into land use plans (especially those designated as time-sensitive). In the long term, the team will be responsible for looking at ways to improve the planning process and allow for flexibility in making decisions which take into account current land conditions and scientific knowledge. In addition, the process developed by the team should insure bureau-wide consistency in the application of stipulations.

2. A Resource Use Authorization Team has been established to follow up on concepts and ideas developed at the Denver meeting. The team is sponsored by Linda Rundell (State Director-New Mexico) and includes Peter Ditton (Alaska-Team Lead), Walt George (Wyoming), Steve Salzman (Nevada), Duane Spencer (Colorado), Jim Perry (WO-310) and other members as required. The team is responsible for developing an IM, or series of IMs, that will (1) direct how the EPCA results can provide flexibility and consistency in the use of stipulation waivers and exceptions to facilitate oil and gas development, where appropriate, and (2) use of the EPCA results to improve communications with operators on the timing requirements for Applications for Permit to Drill (APD) submissions as related to seasonal restrictions and where the EPCA results can be used to facilitate our APD streamlining effort.

3. I have asked that a national telecast be held to describe this effort and to provide me with a forum where I can personally discuss my objectives in the integrating of the EPCA inventory results into the way BLM does business. The live telecast will be held during the May meeting of the Executive Leadership Team in Phoenix. All field managers are expected to participate in this broadcast via their home satellite station and other BLM employees are encouraged to view this presentation.

4. Alan Kesterke (Assistant State Director-Wyoming) will continue to serve as Project Lead for the field as well as sponsor to the Field Committee. Overall coordination between the teams and Washington oversight for this effort will be the responsibility of John Bebout of BLM's National Energy Office (WO-380).

Time Frames: The following time frames apply:

Land Use Planning IM: 4/30/03

Resource use and authorization IM: 4/30/03

National EPCA telecast: Week of 5/12/03

Budget Implications: None.

Coordination: Washington Office National Energy Office (WO-380).

Contact: Please submit your responses or direct any questions to Erick Kaarlela (202) 557-3375 or John Bebout (202) 557-3377.

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