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Subject: FYI: Bureau of Land Management announces next steps, new analyses for upcoming oil and gas lease sales
Date: Friday, October 29, 2021 8:35:37 AM

All – BLM is poised to issue this at 12pm ET tomorrow. They will handle all notifications.

Bureau of Land Management announces next steps, new analyses for upcoming oil and gas lease sales

Assessments will analyze greenhouse gas emissions, social cost of greenhouse gases

WASHINGTON – The Bureau Land Management today announced that state offices will issue draft environmental assessments (EAs) over the coming days to solicit feedback from the public, Tribes, and state agencies regarding proposed oil and gas lease sales to be held in early 2022. For the first time, the EAs will analyze greenhouse gas emissions on a national scale and consider the social cost of greenhouse gases. The EAs will also analyze impacts of potential energy development on air and water quality, wildlife habitat, the quality of life for nearby communities, and other factors.

“The BLM is committed to responsible development on public lands, including ensuring that our environmental reviews consider the climate impacts of energy development on lands and communities. We will continue to exercise the authority and discretion provided under law to conduct leasing in a manner that fulfills the Interior Department’s legal responsibilities,” said **BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning**.

Environmental assessments for Colorado, Eastern States, Montana and the Dakotas, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming will be made available for public comment for 30 days. Each state office will distribute a [news release](#) and post to the [state’s lease sale pages](#) with instructions to access the assessments and to provide comment.

The BLM is also releasing a comprehensive analysis of cumulative greenhouse gas emissions from coal, oil, and gas activities on public lands, titled, “2020 BLM Specialist Report on Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Trends from Coal, Oil, and Gas Exploration and Development on the Federal Mineral Estate,” which helped to inform the greenhouse gas analysis for the proposed lease sales. The Specialist Report uses long-term projections from the Energy Information Administration to analyze expected lifetime emissions from existing and potential new fossil fuel leases on BLM-managed lands.

The scoping period for the proposed sales ended on October 1. A number of nominated parcels were deferred from further consideration for reasons ranging from the need to prioritize leasing outside of priority habitat for Greater Sage-Grouse, to determining that there was insufficient environmental analysis in pre-existing supporting documents. Additional parcels may be deferred based on public comment on the draft EAs.

The recently completed public scoping and preparations for planned lease sales in 2022 are consistent with the district court’s preliminary injunction, [issued over the summer and pending appeal](#), which enjoins the Department’s implementation of Section 208 of Executive Order

14008. Parcels for scoping included those that were deferred in the first and second quarters of 2021.

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From: [U.S. Department of the Interior](#)
To: [Taylor, Rachael S](#)
Subject: Interior Issues Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing Program
Date: Monday, August 16, 2021 5:14:01 PM

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US Department of the Interior News Release



Date: Monday, August 16, 2021
Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

Interior Issues Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing Program

WASHINGTON – Please see below for a statement from the Department of the Interior:

“The Department of the Interior (Interior) confirmed today that the Department of Justice (DOJ) has appealed the preliminary injunction entered by the district court in *Louisiana v. Biden*, which enjoined Interior from implementing the pause in new federal oil and gas leasing as set forth in Section 208 of Executive Order 14008. DOJ is appealing that decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Federal onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing will continue as required by the district court while the government’s appeal is pending.

“The appeal of the preliminary injunction is important and necessary. Together, federal onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs are responsible for significant greenhouse gas emissions and growing climate and community impacts. Yet the current programs fail to adequately incorporate consideration of climate impacts into leasing decisions or reflect the social costs of greenhouse gas emissions including, for example, in royalty rates. Furthermore, past operation of the programs did not adequately reflect the breadth of the Interior Secretary’s stewardship responsibilities, including conserving wildlife habitat, protecting historic and cultural resources, ensuring that public lands are available for multiple uses, protecting marine, coastal, and human environments, meeting trust responsibilities to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes, and providing a fair return to taxpayers. Moreover, the federal oil and gas programs inadequately account for environmental harms to lands, waters, and other resources, foster speculation by oil and gas companies, and frequently leave impacted communities out of important conversations about how they want the public lands and waters managed.

“These issues have been the subject of numerous critical reports over decades by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Interior’s Office of Inspector General (OIG), Congressional Committees, and other independent reviewers. For example, the federal oil and gas program has been on GAO’s ‘High Risk List’ for more than a decade, which notes programs and operations that are ‘vulnerable to waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement, or in need of transformation.’ GAO has issued frequent reports outlining serious concerns with the onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing programs. As far back as 1989, GAO noted that BLM ‘is not exercising balanced stewardship over the public lands.’ In just the last three years, GAO has highlighted deficiencies with noncompetitive leasing, royalty relief policies, data collection, ensuring a fair return, and bonding and reclamation practices in the onshore program, and about decommissioning liabilities, safety and environmental oversight, fiscal returns from the leasing program, and pipeline safety and decommissioning in the offshore program.

“The OIG has regularly highlighted energy management in its annual reports of ‘Major Management and Performance Challenges facing the U.S. Department of the Interior,’ stating, ‘many of DOI’s energy programs are vulnerable to waste, fraud, and mismanagement, which can jeopardize public safety and environmental integrity and increase the financial burden on the American public.’

“Interior will proceed with leasing consistent with the district court’s injunction during the appeal. In complying with the district court’s mandate, Interior will continue to exercise the authority and discretion provided under the law to conduct leasing in a manner that takes into account the program’s many deficiencies. Separately, Interior continues to review the programs’ noted shortcomings, including completing a report. The Department also will undertake a programmatic analysis to address what changes in the Department’s programs may be necessary to meet the President’s targets of cutting greenhouse gas emissions in

half by 2030 and achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

“Pursuant to resolution of another litigation matter involving leasing activity on the public lands, Interior will release a notice of intent to conduct a review of the federal coal leasing program later this week.”

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About the U.S. Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior (DOI) conserves and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people, provides scientific and other information about natural resources and natural hazards to address societal challenges and create opportunities for the American people, and honors the Nation's trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated island communities to help them prosper.



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