

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSION  
FOR 43 CFR 3150 FOR USE OF BLM FORM 3150-4/FS FORM 2800-16, NOTICE OF  
INTENT AND REQUEST TO CONDUCT GEOPHYSICAL EXPLORATION  
OPERATIONS, AND BLM FORM 3150-5/FS FORM 2800-16a, NOTICE OF  
COMPLETION OF GEOPHYSICAL EXPLORATION OPERATIONS,  
OMB CONTROL NUMBER 1004-0162  
Previous terms of clearance: None**

**A. Justification**

**1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

The Mineral Leasing Act (MLA) of 1920 (30 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*) gives the Secretary of the Interior responsibility for oil and gas leasing on approximately 570 million acres of public lands and national forests, and private lands where mineral rights have been retained by the Federal Government. The MLA authorizes the Forest Service (FS) to permit oil and gas companies, lessees, exploration companies, and independent exploration operators to conduct geophysical exploration on or off leases on National Forest System (NFS) lands. The Act of August 7, 1947 (Mineral Leasing Act of Acquired Lands) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to lease lands acquired by the United States (30 U.S.C. 341-359). The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, establishes national policy to protect the environment. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) establishes a public land policy and provides for the management, protection, development, and enhancement of the public lands. The Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of December 22, 1987, authorize the Secretary of the Interior to lease NFS lands with FS consent. On NFS lands, the Secretary of Agriculture authorizes all surface-disturbing activities that take place on a lease.

43 CFR Group 3150 establishes procedures authorizing BLM to issue permits to conduct oil and gas geophysical exploration operations on public lands. 36 CFR Part 228 Subpart E and 36 CFR 251.15 and Subpart B establish procedures for the FS to authorize geophysical operations on FS lands.

The BLM and FS need the information requested on the Notice of Intent forms to process applications for geophysical exploration operations on public lands and to manage environmental compliance requirements under the laws, regulations, and land use plans. The BLM and FS request the information on the Notice of Completion to determine whether rehabilitation of the lands is satisfactory or whether additional rehabilitation is necessary. The respondent may submit the forms in person or by mail. We need the company name, address, and telephone number to identify the person/entity conducting operations. BLM assigns a Case File Number to track each specific operation. We require the legal land description to determine the location of the involved public lands. Additional information we request includes the type and size of the proposed activity, location of the proposed operation, equipment the respondent plans to use,

operating procedures, and timing of the operation.

Applicants must submit information for BLM and FS to determine who is conducting geophysical operations on public lands.

**2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information is used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection. [Be specific. If this collection is a form or a questionnaire, every question needs to be justified.]**

The BLM and the FS request information on the applicant and location/nature of the proposed geophysical exploration operations. We use the information to ensure a thorough, accurate, and timely review of the proposed geophysical activity to:

- ( ) Determine that geophysical operation activities are conducted in a manner consistent with the regulations, local land use plans, and environmental assessments;
- ( ) Maintain an accurate account of geophysical operations on jurisdictional lands;
- ( ) Identify operational points of contact; and
- ( ) Identify who is to be held accountable if there is environmental and/or surface resource damage.

If we do not collect complete and accurate information, the environmental analysis and related NEPA documents may be incomplete, which will delay issuing a permit, and record keeping may be incomplete.

Applicants wishing to conduct geophysical activities must submit the forms in person or by mail to the BLM or FS office which has jurisdiction over the planned operations. Applicants submit the forms for each specific operation. We need the company name, address, and telephone number to identify the person/entity conducting operations. BLM assigns a Case Number and uses it to track the specific operation. BLM and FS will coordinate exploration activity with the State agency that requires approval of a particular operation. We require the legal land description to determine the location of the public lands involved.

Additional specific information we require is identified below.

(43 CFR 5151.1) BLM 3150-4/FS 2800-16, Notice of Intent and Request to Conduct Geophysical Exploration Operations. The applicant submits the form to BLM or FS. The agency uses the information to determine who is conducting geophysical operations on public lands. NEPA requires that appropriate measures are followed to protect the environment.

We require the applicant to submit the following information:

Identify the Project Name - We use the Project Name to distinguish different jobs. One

operator may be employed by several different companies and use a title for each exploration program.

Submit Bond Information - We need bond information need to determine that the applicant is conducting operations under a bond (its own bond or the bond of another entity).

Identify the crew chief - We must be able to determine the person with whom to communicate with locally.

Identify crew number - The crew number ties to the Project Name, and we use it as an additional method of tracking the operation.

Identify the contractor/client - We use this information to determine if the entity is operating under another company's bond.

Include a map at a scale comparable with BLM or FS maps - BLM or FS must be able to identify, for environmental purposes, the exact location of the proposed activity.

Identify the Date of Commencement of Operations - We require the date to determine when the operations will start. BLM or FS can then begin to plan compliance checks.

Identify the type of operation by technique and method - We use this information to complete environmental analyses, which is required by law. We must anticipate any environmental impacts that can be identified. The operator already has the information available and is part of the specifications for the work that is scheduled to be performed.

Identify the type and amount of explosive; shotpoint pattern; shothole depth; number of source points per mile and provide a diagram if the charge is a multi-hole pattern - We require this information to determine any anticipated environmental impacts the operations cause, as NEPA requires. The operator already has the information as part of the specifications.

The applicant reviews the list of Terms and Conditions under which the exploration operations will be conducted and signs at a prework conference. The conference provides a mechanism by which BLM and the operator are aware of the conditions under which operations may be conducted, thus alleviating the need for additional telephone calls and letters. BLM completes the information at the top of the list, and the operator or its representative(s) signs. We require no additional information.

(43 CFR 3151.2) BLM 3150-5/FS 2800-16a, Notice of Completion of Geophysical Exploration Operations. We use the information on the form to determine when oil and gas exploration operations are completed and to determine that mitigating measures are performed to protect the environment as required under the provisions of NEPA. The company name and address, BLM Case No., Crew Number, and Crew Chief are necessary to connect the form to the Application of Intent to Conduct Geophysical Exploration Operations.

We require the operator to:

Identify the number of miles of line completed on public land - We use this information to determine the size of the project for planning purposes so that inspections are performed expeditiously to determine that the operator is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the notice to conduct operations. The information is also necessary to determine if we can release the bond.

Attach maps indicating exact location of geophysical line and shot point - We use this information to make on-the-ground inspections to identify the exact location of the project performed by a specific company to ensure compliance with NEPA requirements. This information is readily available, since the operator surveys and stakes the actual location of the line on the ground.

Describe the hole plugging process used - This information is necessary only if a hole is drilled.

Include copy of Hole Plugging Log - We require the log only if BLM requests it and uses it for State compliance purposes and Federal coordination. The log is sometimes part of local agreements if the geophysical line crosses different types of ownership boundaries (private or state lands in addition to public lands).

In addition to the information submitted on these forms, 43 CFR 3152.6 requires, for operations in Alaska, respondents to report all data and information obtained in carrying out the exploration plan. We use the data to process and approve the plan of development and to ensure that production is accomplished for maximum recovery.

**3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology (e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses), and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden [and specifically how this collect meets GPEA requirements].**

This form is electronically available to the public in fillable format on BLM's Forms website <https://www.blm.gov/FormsCentral/show-home.do> In the electronic format, users can complete certain portions and then only modify needed sections for different programs and thereby reduce the time involved in completing the application portion of the form. The requested information is unique to each applicant/operator and to each specific operation because respondents are operators who apply to conduct geophysical activities on an as-needed basis. Individuals may computerize specific records in order to complete required reports.

Under the requirements of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, BLM expects to collect 25% of these forms electronically over this approval period.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information**

**already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

An interagency BLM/FS team revised the respective geophysical forms to streamline and improve the process for both the Federal Government and its customers. The team developed the interagency joint forms to replace the four forms previously in use. The current forms facilitate and expedite permitting. They also streamline and improve administrative review and approval. Combining the BLM and FS individual forms into a BLM/FS form ensures consistent management of geophysical operations on public lands and better serves the public. Adoption of the new forms provides standard forms for use by the oil and gas or geophysical industry to submit information and request authorization of operations whether on BLM or FS lands. It also facilitates authorizing projects that extend over lands under both jurisdictions, since the BLM and the FS use the same information and process.

We collect and use the information to maintain an accurate account of operations conducted on public lands and reference for accountability if there is damage to the lands. Geophysical operations are unique events, and each proposed operation is different, varying by location, equipment, or operator, for example. No duplication of information occurs, and there is no similar information already available to assess a new proposal. The information can only be supplied by the entity proposing to conduct geophysical exploration operations on the lands involved and is not available from any other data source.

**5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I) describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

The collection will not have a significant impact on small entities. The forms are simple to complete, and the BLM's State and Field Offices provide maps and land descriptions for use by small businesses and individuals. Each State Office and District Office has a public room set aside that is equipped with computers, copying facilities, and land plats for the use of those who wish to verify land descriptions. The information we require is limited to the minimum necessary to maintain a record of who conducts operations on the lands. For the FS, individual operators and companies have the option of completing a Notice when identifying their proposed geophysical operations, or they may supply the information in a different format, such as a letter. However, use of the standardized interagency forms reduces the paperwork and procedural burden on individual operators and companies.

**6. Describe the consequence to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing the burden.**

If we fail to collect the requested information, the BLM and the FS will have no knowledge of exactly who is conducting geophysical exploration operations on public lands or where, and therefore will not be able to determine the identity of the responsible party if environmental damage occurs. We require the forms only when an entity wants to conduct oil and gas geophysical exploration operations and when those operations are complete.

Although we do not require the applicant to submit the form, applicants must submit specific information in order to obtain a permit. We developed the forms for the convenience of applicants and to facilitate processing the information by BLM and FS. The applicant determines the frequency of when to submit the form or data collection. Uniform, case-by-case data submission and recordation may help identify unnecessary government requirements and permit better forecasting of future workloads.

Use of the interagency forms facilitates orderly and consistent application information. Through standardization of the data we collect utilizing these forms, the applicants will better understand FS and BLM requirements for permit review and approval. Also, we will be able to better track and administer the geophysical permits and activities we authorize. Use of the forms produces an improved data base inventory that provides current and reliable public information. Finally, it provides better information for planning and formulating budgets.

**7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in manner:**

- \* **requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly;**
- \* **requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;**
- \* **requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document;**
- \* **requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years;**
- \* **in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study;**
- \* **requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB;**
- \* **that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or**
- \* **requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.**

There are no special circumstances that require collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the guidelines. We do not exceed the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

**8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice [and in response to the PRA statement associated with the collection over the past three years] and describe actions**

**taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.**

**Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. [Please list the names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers of persons contacted.]**

**Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years — even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.**

The required 60-day notice was published in the *Federal Register* (73 FR 52409) on September 9, 2008; the comment period closed on November 10, 2008. A copy of the notice is attached. We received one comment from the public. The comment did not address, and was not germane to, this information collection; rather, it was a general invective about the Department of the Interior, the BLM, the oil and gas industry, and Washington politicians. Therefore, we have no response to the comment.

During the approval period, we consulted with the following respondents to solicit comments on the burden hour and cost estimates, availability of data, frequency of collection, and clarity of instructions. Based on this outreach, the burden estimates in Item 12 reflect their input.

Also, there is field office interaction on a regular basis with the operator when collected information is processed to determine whether there are complaints, or difficulties or problems encountered by respondents in providing and completing the required information. No difficulties were reported.

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**9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors and grantees.**

We do not provide payments or gifts to the respondents.

**10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

We protect the applicant's confidentiality to the extent consistent with the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). We maintain confidentiality for one year after the Notice of Completion is filed, if requested by the operator.

**11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, or other matters that are commonly considered private. The justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.**

We do not ask respondents questions of a sensitive nature.

**12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should:**

**Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.**

**If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I.**

**Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included in Item 14.**



We estimate an average time of one hour to complete the Notice of Intent and to attend the prework conference. We estimate 20 minutes to complete the Notice of Completion. The information we require is clearly outlined on the form and in the terms and conditions attached. Respondents already maintain the information for their own record keeping purposes and need only to transfer or attach it to the forms.

We estimate approximately 625 Notices of Intent, 625 Notices of Completion (600 to BLM and 25 to FS), and 3 nonform data items (Alaska only if off lease) are filed annually for a total of 836 reporting hours, as shown in the table below. Respondents vary from small businesses to major corporations.

<b>43 CFR</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Hours Per Response</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>
3151.1	3150-4/2800-16	625	1 hour	625
3151.2	3150-5/2800-16a	625	20 minutes	208
3152.6	Nonform data (Alaska only if off lease)	3	1 hour	3
		<b>Total 1,253</b>		<b>836</b>

The table below provides a summary of the estimates of hour and cost burdens. The respondents are business entities.

The following table provides a summary of the estimates of hour and cost burdens. The estimated time includes that necessary to comply with all information collection requirements in the regulations. We based the calculation of the burden cost on an hourly rate of salary plus benefits of  $\$33.43 \times 1.4$  (benefits) = \$46.80 for a Manager/Professional (multiplier based on Bureau of Labor Statistics news release USDL: 07-1883 of December 11, 2007).

The costs to respondents are for time spent compiling data, researching information, and completing the forms. There are no capital and startup costs involved because the information requested is maintained by the operators for their own use, for example, financial planning purposes and calculation of cost codes. The operator/landsman completes the forms from data already on hand. For Alaska, the operator provides a copy to BLM of the information it collects while carrying out an exploration plan. Geophysical contractors generally generate their own records, are familiar with geophysical field work, and are familiar with the regulations and statutes.

Information Collection (43 CFR)	Form	Hours Per Response	Number of Responses	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Mean Wage Plus x 1.4 (Benefits)*	Total Annual Burden Costs
3151.1	3150-4/2800-16	1	625	625	\$46.80	\$29,250
3151.2	3150-5/2800-16a	20 min.	625	208	\$46.80	\$ 9,734
3152.6	Nonform data	1	3	3	\$46.80	\$ 140
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>1,253</b>	<b>836</b>		<b>\$39,124</b>

\*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: Employer costs for employee compensation Table 11. Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation and costs as a percent of total compensation: Full-time workers in private industry, Management, professional and related; Natural resources, . . . extraction . . . , September 2007. Multiplier based on Bureau of Labor Statistics news release USDL: 07-1883 of December 11, 2007.

**13. Provide an estimate of the total annual [non-hour] cost burden to respondents or recordkeepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden shown in Items 12 and 14).**

Respondents are not required to purchase additional computer hardware or software to comply with these information requirements. There are no filing or processing fees associated with this information collection outside of Alaska. In Alaska, there is a \$25 nonrefundable filing fee for each application for geophysical exploration permit, and a \$25 nonrefundable filing fee for renewal of the exploration permit, except where the exploration operations are to be conducted on-lease.

**14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal Government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies also may aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.**

The cost to the Federal Government to process the applications and notices for this collection includes:

- Conducting field inspections;
- On-the-ground environmental analyses, which include monitoring endangered species sites and archeological sites;
- Conducting archeological surveys; and
- Determining reclamation measures.

Approximately six employees, who, on a yearly basis, spend approximately 20 percent of their 2,080 annual duty hours processing information from respondents, include a Manager, two Supervisors, a Petroleum Engineer, a Geologist, and a surface use specialist and/or an environmental specialist. The information processing does not involve clerical work.

We estimate the total annual cost to the Federal Government to process the responses for this information collection is \$127,167, based on the salary/benefit amounts shown below:

Position	Grade	Hourly pay rate*	Hourly rate including benefits (1.5 x hourly rate)*	Number of hours worked	Cost per year
Manager	GS-14, Step 1	\$39.98	\$59.97	416	\$24,948
Supervisor (2)	GS-13, Step 1	\$33.84	\$50.76	416	\$21,116 x 2 = \$42,232
Skilled technical (2) (Petroleum Engineer; Geologist)	GS-13, Step 1	\$33.84	\$50.76	416	\$21,116 x 2 = \$42,232
Surface use specialist	GS-12, Step 1	\$28.45	\$42.68	416	\$17,755
<b>Total</b>					\$127,167

\*Hourly pay rate based on the Office of Personnel Management 2009 General Schedule (Base) Salary Table, effective January 2009. Multiplier based on Bureau of Labor Statistics news release USDL: 07-1883 of December 11, 2007.

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.**

Item 13, OMB 83-I (annual record keeping and reporting burden): The annual reporting and recording keeping burden remains the same as the previously approved information collection.

Item 14, OMB 83-I (annual reporting and record keeping cost burden (in thousands of dollars)): The annual reporting and record keeping cost burden remains the same as the previously approved information collection.

**16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.**

The data we collect as a result of this information collection will not be published for statistical use. The NEPA process will make information in each form available to the public. For FS, the Management Attainment Reporting will include information from the forms.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.**

BLM will display the expiration date of the OMB approval.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions," of OMB Form 83-I.**

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.