

Justification for Non-Material, Non-Substantive Modifications

Onshore Oil and Gas Geophysical Exploration (43 CFR Part 3150 and 36 CFR Parts 228 and 251)

OMB Control Number 1004-0162

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requests continued OMB approval for BLM Forms 3150-4 and 3150-5 (respectively, Notice of Intent and Authorization to Conduct Oil and Gas Geophysical Exploration Operations and Notice of Completion of Oil and Gas Geophysical Exploration Operations). These forms are also known as FS Form 2800-16 and FS Form 2800-16a, since they are used by the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service). We are requesting non-material, non-substantive modifications to the data collected in these forms.

The forms for which we are requesting modifications are included in control number 1004-0162, which authorizes the BLM and the Forest Service to collect information in order to regulate surface-disturbing, onshore, geophysical exploration activities on unleased public lands managed by the BLM; unleased National Forest System lands managed by the Forest Service; and lands associated with oil and gas leases, communitized areas, and unitized areas on Federal lands. This control number also includes collections of information pertaining to oil and gas geophysical exploration on Federal lands other than those managed by the BLM or the Forest Service when:

- An agency of the Department of Defense refers an application for exploration to the BLM (see 43 CFR 3153.1); or
- In accordance with an interagency agreement between the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and the BLM, an application is received for a project that would cross BOR lands (see BLM Manual 3150.5).

Geophysical and mapping technologies and methods have evolved since the BLM and the Forest Service originally created the 3150-4 and 3150-5 forms. The BLM and the Forest Service seek approval to edit the forms to acknowledge and document the new technologies and methods.

BLM Form 3150-4 / FS Form 2800-16 provides surface-managing agencies with advance notice before an operator conducts operations on Federal lands and opportunity for the agencies to approve operations with Terms and Conditions and Conditions of Approval. The following questions are proposed to be modified:

Item 1: Item 1 currently requires the applicant to enter a full legal description of the project area and submit paper maps. Updated Item 1 would eliminate the need for a detailed legal description and instead would require the applicant to submit a GIS-compatible data file that was used to generate the map. The agency would then use this information to generate its own maps and determine the appropriate legal description. These changes would provide more useful data to the agency and reduce the agency's and applicant's burden.

Description and Type of Operations: Items a. through d. were updated to reflect new technologies and terminologies and to prompt minor elaboration on operational details the agencies have traditionally requested in order to complete the required National Environmental Policy Act review. The additional details are minor in nature and would not increase the applicant's existing burden.

In addition to these changes in the questions, the BLM proposes to provide the applicant with the option of submitting a separate Plan of Operations, rather than filling in the expandable blanks in the form. This would simplify the form-filling process for the applicant and the reviewing process for the agency.

BLM Form 3150-5 / FS Form 2800-16a provides surface-managing agencies with information that enables them to determine when oil and gas exploration operations are completed and to determine that mitigating measures were performed to protect the environment as required under the provisions of NEPA. The following questions are proposed to be modified:

Item 1 & Item 3: These two items would be merged. Rather than requiring a full legal description and paper maps of any deviations from the approved authorization, the authorized user would submit a map and the GIS-compatible data used to generate the map and previously required legal descriptions. These changes would provide more useful data to the agency and reduce the agency's and applicant's burden.

These modifications would not change any of the estimated burdens associated with this control number, and BLM does not anticipate that these modifications will be controversial.