

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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In Reply To:
2800/1610 (924.5) P

June 3, 2004

EMAIL TRANSMISSION -
Information Bulletin No. MT-2004-066

To: Field Managers

From: Deputy State Director, Division of Resources

Subject: Request for Comments – Internal Preliminary Draft Wind Energy Development of
Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) DD: 6/18/04

Program Areas: Land Use Planning and Lands

Purpose: The purpose of the Information Bulletin (IB) is to solicit comments on the Internal Preliminary Draft Wind Energy Programmatic EIS.

Background: The Bureau is preparing a Programmatic EIS to evaluate issues associated with wind energy development on Western public lands (excluding Alaska) administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on October 17, 2003, and the public scoping period ended on December 19, 2003.

Washington Office IB No. 2004-053, Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS, clarified how the projected outcomes of the Programmatic EIS will be integrated with planning efforts throughout the Bureau and identified subsequent actions that would be undertaken at the Field Office (FO) level.

Action: We are asking for the FO review and comment on the internal Preliminary Draft Wind Energy Programmatic EIS at this time.

The Draft EIS is available electronically on a secure website at: <https://web.ead.anl.gov/Windead>

Reviewers will need a user name and password to gain access to the site. These will be sent through e-mail to each FO Manager, planner(s) and realty specialist(s). The document is broken into multiple files, some of which are very large. Each file can be read, printed, or downloaded to a local drive.

To aid in your review and comment, it is suggested that you focus on the following sections.

1.) Appendix B (National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) Analyses): This contains FO maps showing the distribution of wind resources with medium to high potential development. Montana maps are contained in the file titled: Appendix_B2.pdf. Each FO should look at the map for the following items:

- Do any of the lands identified as suitable for potential development in the Maximum Potential Development Scenario (MPDS) need to be excluded?
- Are Exclusion Areas (for Wilderness, WSA, and National Monuments) depicted correctly?
- Are the FO boundaries correct?
- Are the names of all FOs, cities, and towns spelled correctly?
- Are major electric transmission lines (say 69 KV or greater) depicted correctly?
- Does anything else look wrong?

2.) Chapter 4 (Affected Environment): FOs should look at the regional descriptions of their affected FO and provide any suggestions and/or additions.

3.) Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.2, Examples of Recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs)): FOs should look at the recommended BMPs and compare them with what we ask others to do in non-renewable development (i.e., oil and gas).

4.) Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.3, Land Use Plan Amendments to Address Wind Energy Development): As part of this review, each FO will need to determine if they want to use this Programmatic EIS to amend their Resource Management Plan (RMP) to specifically address Wind Energy Development. Specifically, each FO will need to fill out two tables (Attachments 2 and 3):

-Table 6-1: This table lists all plans in the 11-state study area. FOs will need to check the appropriate column once they determine whether or not their RMP will be amended by the Programmatic EIS. The only column where a text explanation is required is the "OTHER" column.

-Table 6-2: This table only needs to be filled out if a FO decides they would like the Programmatic EIS to amend their RMP. An IM from the Washington Office will be coming out the week of June 1, 2004 to help further explain this review action.

In general, the following types of comments are desired:

- Are the appropriate issues of concern covered in the Preliminary Draft EIS?
- Are the data presented in the Preliminary Draft EIS correct?
- Are their additional references we should be citing?
- Are the recommended policies and BMPs appropriate?
- Are the proposed action and alternatives adequately explained for the public?
- Do you have suggestions about the format and presentation?

Timeframes: Comments and tables should be submitted to Craig Haynes, Lands Program Lead, Montana State Office, by June 18, 2004. Comments should be submitted by using the Draft Wind Energy Development Programmatic EIS Comment Template, included as Attachment 1; and use the table templates included as Attachments 2 and 3.

Contact: For further information, contact Craig Haynes at 406-896-5040 or James Beaver at 406-896-5023.

Signed by: Chun C. Wong *for* Howard A. Lemm

Authenticated by: Janie Fox (MT920)

3 Attachments

- 1 – Wind Energy Comment Template (1p)
- 2 - Table 6-1 (1p)
- 3 - Table 6-2 (1p)

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