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**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
San Luis Valley Field Office**

DECISION RECORD

**Geothermal Leasing Resource Management Plan Amendment EA
DOI-BLM-CO-140-2010-14-EA**

DECISION: This document describes my decision to authorize the Proposed Action as described in the San Luis Valley Geothermal Leasing Resource Management Plan Amendment Environmental Assessment (SLVFO RMPA/EA) and subsequent finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The proposed action incorporates all of the 2008 *Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Geothermal Leasing in the Western United States Record of Decision* program procedures, Best Management Practices, and stipulations and tailors them to critical identified resources issues and locations. The PEIS meets the SLVFO RMPA/EA objective to facilitate orderly, economic, and environmentally sound geothermal leasing and technology. The proposed action (Alternative B in the SLVFO RMPA/EA) utilized the goals and objectives of the San Luis Valley RMP and newly acquired resource information, and has informed the BLM decision-making regarding appropriate means of reducing impacts from possible geothermal leasing and development.

The new analysis and subsequent land allocation decisions outlined in the Proposed Action (Alternative B) of the SLVFO RMPA/EA require the San Luis Valley Field Office to amend the SLVFO-RMP.

The RMPA/EA that discusses and analyzes the Proposed Action and alternatives is available at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) San Luis Valley Field Office, 46525 Highway 114, Saguache, Colorado 81149 and at the following web address:

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/slvfo/Geothermal_Leasing.html

Please direct questions about the Decision Record, EA, or FONSI to Andrew Archuleta, San Luis Valley Field Office Manager, at (719) 655-2547, or by submitting your questions to BLM_CO_SLVPLC_Comments@blm.gov.

BACKGROUND:

The PEIS analyzed geothermal potential, leasing alternatives and leasing stipulations for the subsurface mineral estate administered by BLM in Colorado, including SLVFO. The Record of Decision for the PEIS amended 14 RMPs in Colorado but did not include the SLVFO-RMP. The BLM proposes to amend the SLVFO-RMP using this RMPA/EA. The analysis in the RMPA/EA focuses on the environmental consequences of future geothermal leasing and development decisions that may be made, consistent with the selection of the proposed

alternative B analyzed in the RMPA/EA. Decisions made in this project will only apply to BLM-administered lands.

The scoping process for the proposed amendment and associated NEPA analysis began June 2010 with the formal scoping comment period starting on September 13, 2010, with the publication of a notice of intent (NOI) in the Federal Register. The public comment period closed on October 13, 2010. A total of 86 comments were submitted, 5 comments were related to the NEPA process, 11 comments related to implementation of geothermal development, and 52 related to resource concerns.

The Draft RMPA/EA was available for public review and comment from March 12, 2012 to May 24, 2012. The BLM distributed the EA to individuals, agencies, and organizations via the BLM's website and mailings. Two public meetings were held in March 2012, one in Saguache and one in Alamosa, to provide an opportunity to comment on the EA. A total of 22 letters from individuals, organizations and agencies were received. Response to comments can be reviewed in the RMPA/EA Chapter 5.4.

RATIONALE:

The RMPA/EA describes the purpose and need for the proposed land use plan amendment, three alternatives for the plan amendment, the affected environment in the planning area, the anticipated impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) from each alternative on the affected environment, and the planning effort. Each alternative is a stand-alone suite of geothermal leasing allocations and management actions and fall within the spectrum of possible actions the BLM could take.

The RMPA/EA allocates BLM-administered lands and federal mineral estate with geothermal potential as closed, open with standard lease terms and conditions, or open with major to moderate constraints to geothermal leasing. Alternative B uses the decisions from the 2008 Geothermal Leasing ROD as a baseline and then adds additional site specific stipulations to supplement decisions made in the PEIS and tailor the decisions to the identified planning and resource issues and objectives.

Alternative B meets the SLVFO RMPA/EA objective to facilitate orderly, economic and environmentally sound exploration and development of geothermal resources, using best available technology.

PROTEST/APPEALS:

BLM's decision to amend the 1991 San Luis Valley Resource Area RMP is not subject to further administrative appeal. The proposed plan amendment was subject to a 30-day protest period, that ended October 31, 2012, and no protests were filed.

SIGNATURE OF RECOMMENDING OFFICIAL:



Andrew Archuleta
Field Manager
San Luis Valley Field Office

9/13/13
Date

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:



Helen M. Hankins, State Director

Sept. 13, 2013
Date