



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Arizona State Office

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Phoenix, Arizona 85004-4427

www.blm.gov/az/

April 2, 2013

In Reply Refer To:
9015 (9320)

Dear All Interested Parties:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have agreed that there is a need to be proactive in controlling hazardous vegetation as well as noxious weed and invasive plant infestations along public roadways in Arizona. While the BLM manages 12.2 million acres within the State of Arizona, ADOT is responsible for maintaining hundreds of miles of interstate, and some of which are within rights-of-way (ROW) across BLM lands. Each highway ROW not only contains areas with relatively undisturbed natural vegetation, but is also being impacted by noxious weeds and invasive plants. In order to address these issues, the BLM and ADOT have agreed to prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) to address issues related to the use of herbicides for treatment of vegetation within ADOT ROW.

The BLM proposes to authorize ADOT to conduct annual herbicide treatment programs to contain, control, or eradicate undesirable vegetation that pose safety hazards or threaten native plant communities in ROW. The herbicide applications would be consistent with the Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) (BLM 2007). The proposed action would implement the PEIS by using herbicides to treat ROW to reduce the incidence and spread of undesirable vegetation. The purpose of the proposed action is to identify herbicides available for vegetation treatment by ADOT personnel on lands administered by the BLM, and to describe the conditions and limitations for their use.

The BLM will be preparing an EA to document the estimated environmental effects of the proposed project. In order to appropriately address issues relevant to the proposal in the forthcoming EA, we are seeking your input. Comments should be as specific as possible and provide information on potential issues or concerns that the EA should address. To assist in making your comments, we have posted a draft of the Proposed Action and Purpose and Need to the BLM website at:

<https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/projectSummary.do?methodName=renderDefaultProjectSummary&projectId=34810>

Your input will be most useful if your comments are received by May 10, 2013. However, comments will be accepted and reviewed up until the time a decision on the project is made. Questions pertaining to the ADOT Herbicide Use Environmental Assessment and responses should be directed to Lisa Soo, Natural Resource Specialist, at 602-417-9242 or by email at lsoo@blm.gov.

Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses available for public disclosure in their entirety.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,



 Raymond Suazo
State Director