UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BAKERSFIELD FIELD OFFICE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Aera:
Abandonments - Maxwell A-1, A-2, K-1, 143, 156, 200, 202, 224, 385, and Western 7-30N
DOI-BLM-CA-C060-2016-0045-EA

BACKGROUND

Aera the Operator/Lessee submitted TEN Sundry Notices of Intent to plug and abandon wells: Maxwell A-1, A-2, K-1, 143, 156, 200, 202, 224, 385, and Western 7-30N, in the federal leases (CAS019392 & CAS021593) in the Midway-Sunset Oil Field, in Section 21& 27; 31S; 22E. No new habitat is expected or approved for these ten projects.

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide Aera with the authority to produce their federal mineral lease and to supply energy resources to the American public. The need for this action is to respond to the Sundry Notices submitted by the proponent to conduct operations and access federal minerals administered by the BLM Bakersfield Field Office in accordance with Federal Onshore Order No. 1.

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared containing project-specific analysis of the impacts that could result from the approval of these Sundry Notices. This EA is attached to and incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) determination.

Finding of No Significant Impact

On the basis of the information contained in the EA, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the Proposed Action will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the Bakersfield Resource Management Plan, approved in 2014; (2) the Proposed Action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan; and (3) the Proposed Action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared. This finding is based on the following discussion.

Context: The proposed project is located on private surface overlying their federal mineral leases (CAS019392 & CAS021593). The lease contains oil wells, oil and gas production being the only use of the location. The discretionary action is to approve the one Sundry submitted by Aera, authorizing them to plug and abandon wells: Maxwell A-1, A-2, K-1, 143, 156, 200, 202,

224, 385, and Western 7-30N in Midway-Sunset. This action does not have state-wide importance.

Most proposed activity is a site-specific action with minor localized effects on air quality, soil disturbance, and special status plant and animal species in the immediate area. The EA details the effects of the action alternatives. None of the effects identified, including cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and do not exceed those effects described in the Resource Management Plan.

Intensity: I have considered the potential intensity/severity of the impacts anticipated from the Aera proposed action to plug and abandon wells: Maxwell A-1, A-2, K-1, 143, 156, 200, 202, 224, 385, and Western 7-30N. The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27. The discussions below apply to all project elements contained within the EA:

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse and a significant effect may exist regardless of the perceived balance of effects.** Potential impacts include temporary dust due to soil disturbance and vehicle traffic. However, none of these impacts would be significant at the local scale or cumulatively because of the small scale of the project and design features that would reduce soil disturbance and dust impacts to immeasurable levels.

2. **The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** Public health and safety was not identified as an issue. The proposed project is comparable to other similar activities and projects already undertaken with no unusual health or safety concerns.

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas**. No park lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas would be adversely affected by the proposed development. This project is not on prime farmlands. The project area has been surveyed and analyzed for biological, historical, and cultural resources. The project will not significantly affect biological, historical, or cultural resources. Biological resources would not be significantly affected because

4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** It is highly unlikely that any portion of the analyzed action would be controversial. Similar actions are commonplace in the area and draw little controversy.

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The proposed project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar projects in similar areas and, have found effects to be reasonably predictable. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment which are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The proposed project does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects. Any future APDs or Sundry's submitted within the project area would be considered independently and be subject to site specific NEPA analysis and documentation.

7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The project is consistent with the actions and impacts anticipated in the Bakersfield RMP, as amended. No significant cumulative effects have been identified. A complete disclosure of the effects of the action and no action alternative is contained in the EA.

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** Cultural resource survey was completed for the project area and no cultural resources were identified within the area of potential effect (BLM Cultural Resource Inventory Report #6000-2014-32 and 6000-2015-2). As a result there will be no adverse effect to districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and there will be no loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** The proposed action is not expected to have significant impacts to federally listed species (San Joaquin kit fox and blunt-nosed leopard lizard), or critical habitat. There is no designated critical habitat in the project area.

10. **Whether the action threatens to violate; Federal, State, or local law or requirements for the protection of the environment**. This action would not violate federal, state, or local laws or requirements. The proposed action is fully consistent with the 2014 Bakersfield Resource Management Plan. The EA is in full compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and is consistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended.

Prepared by:	/s/ Dave Faires Project Lead	2/29/16 Date
Approved by:	/s/ John Hodge Authorized Officer	3/7/16 Date