

Decision Record for a Categorically Excluded Action

Introduction and Background

Ford Motor Company (FMC) is requesting a land use permit (LUP) in order to test their sport-utility vehicles (SUVs) off-road capable vehicles within the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. They will evaluate the vehicle over identified terrain with various chassis and powertrain hardware, completing up to 15 passes per day.

Most testing will be driving straight lines within Bureau of Land Management (BLM) designated areas with at slow to moderate speeds; usually just above the minimum speed required to maintain forward progress. The purpose is to evaluate the overall performance in off road conditions.

The route will be controlled by safety spotters at each end of a given route and supplemental spotters around the course all in radio contact with the test vehicle at all times.

Medical response personnel will be on hand at all times to provide immediate medical care and implement the provided medical response plan if required. All support vehicles are equipped with safety response equipment including fire suppression (dry chemical and foam), tow straps and tools.

The test vehicles will be equipped with roll bars, 5-point safety harnesses, and fire suppression systems. Drivers wear full face helmets and head and neck restraints during all testing. All vehicles will be equipped with a whip.

Decision and Rationale

It is my decision to approve the proposed action as described in Categorical Exclusion (CX) number DOI-BLM-CA-D070-2016-0060-CX. I find this action conforms to BLM (516 DM 11.9) Categorical Exclusions with no exceptions. I further find this action in conformance with applicable land use plans, laws and regulations and that it will not cause unnecessary or undue degradation.

Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Policies and Land Use Plans

This action conforms to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan, 1980, as amended because it is specifically provided for or is clearly consistent with the Resource Management Plan (RMP) objectives and decisions as follows:

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions) and, if applicable, implementation plan decisions:

LUP Name: California Desert Conservation Area

Date Approved: 1980

Other documents: Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan

Approved: 2013

The CDCA plan designated the lands as Class I. Class I is an intensive use class. Its purpose is to provide for concentrated use of lands and resources. Reasonable protection will be provided for sensitive natural and cultural values. Mitigation of impacts on resources and rehabilitation of impacted areas will occur insofar as possible. The proposed action is of the type and degree of activities allowed within this classification.

Administrative Remedies

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Department of Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, E-1712, Sacramento, CA 95825.

//Signed//

Thomas F. Zale
Field Manager

4/15/16

Date