



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

WY-183Q Third Quarter 2018 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale

BLM Wyoming Wind River/Bighorn Basin District

Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONSI) DOI-BLM-WY-R000-2018-0001-EA

Draft

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FINDING OF NO NEW SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
BLM–Wyoming Third Quarter 2018 Competitive Oil & Gas Lease Sale
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-WY-R000-2018-0001-EA

INTRODUCTION:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-WY-R000-2018-0001-EA), with Attachment 1 Parcel Descriptions with Stipulations, Attachment 1-A Overview of Stipulations Applied to Parcels in Charts, and Attachment 2 Public Comments and BLM Response, which are attached to this FONNSI, to address the offering of oil and gas leases at the Third Quarter 2018 Competitive Oil & Gas Lease Sale and subsequent lease issuance. Parcels evaluated in this EA are within the BLM’s Wind River/Bighorn Basin District (WR/BBD), including the Lander Field Office (LFO), the Worland Field Office (WFO), and the Cody Field Office (CyFO).

Management decisions in the Lander RMP (2014), the Worland RMP (2015), the Cody RMP (2015), have been applied. Stipulations have been applied to each lease parcel to address resource concerns using current RMP management actions.

No parcels were nominated in the Cody Field Office; two parcels were nominated in the Worland Field Office; and twenty parcels were nominated in the Lander Field Office. There were no deletions or deferrals of parcels in whole or in part.

Of the 29,627.04 acres of federal mineral estate nominated, brought forward, and reviewed in this lease sale, approximately 1106.24 surface acres are fee surface, 120.00 surface acres are State of Wyoming, and approximately 28,400.80 surface acres managed by the BLM. The EA references the lease sale acreage as the total federal mineral estate acreage of 29,627.04 acres.

In total, 22 parcels containing 29,627.04 acres located within the field offices in the WR/BBD were nominated through “Expressions of Interest” for the Third Quarter 2018 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale. All portions of all parcels moving forward are available for leasing through the applicable RMPs, with appropriate leasing stipulations applied. There are no unresolved new concerns relating to plan conformance with the Lander, Worland, and Cody, approved RMPs.

Parcel and Acreage Summary

Office	EOI Parcels	Deleted Parcels (In Part)	Deferred Parcels (In Part)	Analyze d Parcels	EOI Acres	Acres Removed	Analyzed Acres
Cody	0	0	0	0	0	0.000	0
Worland	2	0	0	2	834.13	0.000	834.13
Lander	20	0	0	20	28,792.91	0.000	28,792.91
WR/BBD Total	22	0	0	22	29,627.04	0.000	29,627.04

FINDING OF NO NEW SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based upon a review of the EA and the included Attachments, I have determined that the project is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively, with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the current Lander, Worland, or Cody RMPs/ Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). Therefore, an EIS is not needed.

This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context:

The action would occur within the Lander, Worland, and Cody Field Office boundaries and would have local impacts on the resources similar to and within the scope of those described and considered within the RMPs and their respective EISs. The project is an action on BLM administered land and/or mineral estate that by itself does not have known or identified international, national, regional, or state-wide importance.

Intensity:

The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and incorporated into resources and issues considered (includes supplemental authorities Attachment 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandum, Acts, regulations and Executive Orders.

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

1. Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.

The Action/Alternatives would affect resources as described in the EA. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to the various resources were incorporated in the design of the action alternatives. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the RMPs and their respective EISs.

2. The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.

The proposed action is to offer lease parcels for sale. No aspect of the Action would have an effect on public health and safety. If the parcels are subsequently sold and the leases enter into a development stage, public health or safety would be further addressed through site specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

Any parcels nominated which have unique characteristics, such as leasing along historic trails, or sage grouse habitat areas, have been stipulated in conformance with the approved Land Use Plans.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

While federal oil and gas leases have frequently been protested by a variety of non-governmental organizations, based on perceived environmental impacts to the specific parcel, the overarching act of oil and gas leasing has not been highly controversial. As demonstrated in the EA, impacts to the quality of the human environment from the offering, sale, and issuance of the lease parcels are not expected to be significant or highly controversial. Site specific NEPA will be conducted which addresses specific effects on resources at the time of development. Controversy in this context is considered to be in terms of disagreement about the nature of the effects; not political controversy or expressions of opposition to the action or preference among the alternatives analyzed within the RMPs.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The project is not unique or unusual. Oil and gas leasing and post-lease development have been ongoing in the United States, including portions of the area, for more than a century. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA and corresponding RMPs. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The administrative act of leasing all or part of the 22 parcels containing approximately 29,787.04 acres or mineral estate would not result in any direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Regarding future development, the assessment of GHG emissions and climate change is in its formative phase. While it is not possible to accurately quantify potential impacts from the emission of GHGs in the affected areas as a result of making the proposed tracts available for leasing, some general assumptions can be made: subsequent development/production of the proposed parcels will result in additional emissions of GHGs, both direct or indirect. The total amount of production from the parcels to be leased cannot be estimated at this time. While GHG emissions are also associated with the use of produced substances, estimates of those emissions depend upon how produced substances are used, how regulation of the various GHG parameters by the delegated agencies is applied, and whether any Best Available Control Technologies are utilized at the upstream or downstream activity location(s).

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.

This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. The actions were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not expected. Again, oil and gas leasing and post-lease development have been ongoing in the United States, including portions of the area, for more than a century.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts - which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.

The EA and the included Attachment 1, Parcel Descriptions with Stipulations, did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the RMPs and associated EISs. The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not expected.

The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. The EA has projected the cumulative direct and indirect GHG emissions for the full Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenario in each of the three field offices in the Wind River/Bighorn Basin District. The 22 proposed parcels (29,787.04) acres represents 0.43% of the total mineral estate acreage in the Wind River/Bighorn Basin District and if developed to the full RFD, and assuming 100% combustion of the production stream, would produce less than 1% of all GHG emissions, both direct and indirect, from oil and gas development in these field offices. Since climate change and global warming are global phenomena, for purposes of this NEPA analysis, the analysis presented above about the direct and indirect effects of GHG emissions from the proposed actions is also an analysis of the cumulative effects of the proposed actions. Consistent with CEQ guidance, the BLM has determined that this analysis “adequately addresses the cumulative impacts for climate change from the proposed action and its alternatives, and therefore a separate cumulative effects analysis for GHG emissions is not needed. Additionally, the referenced RMPs/EISs provide cumulative effects analysis for oil and gas development based on the reasonably foreseeable oil and gas development scenario. Significant cumulative effects are not expected beyond what has been analyzed in the underlying RMPs, as amended (2014 and 2015).

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 (NRHP) or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

There are no features within the project area listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP that would be adversely affected by a decision to offer for sale the subject parcels. If the

leases enter into a development stage, NRHP resources would be further addressed through site specific NEPA analysis. Known sites occurring in any the parcels that would be offered for sale are protected by either a controlled use or no surface occupancy stipulation. Refer to item 3 for additional discussion.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the endangered species act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM’s sensitive species list.

Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to wildlife and fisheries have been incorporated into the lease stipulations. Although listed species may occupy habitat within the project boundary, it has been determined that they will not be affected because surface use restrictions, including timing limitation stipulations (TLS), no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations, and controlled surface use (CSU) stipulations, as well as closed to leasing designations, will be applied to the lease parcels. Furthermore, post-lease actions/authorizations (e.g., Application for Permit to Drill (APDs), road/pipeline Right-of-Ways (ROWs)), could be encumbered by other reasonable restrictions on a case-by-case basis, as required through project-specific NEPA analysis or other environmental review.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs.

Authorized Officer

Date