



**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Finding of No Significant Impact
DOI-BLM-WY-R000-2018-0001-EA
DOI-BLM-WY-P000-2018-0001-EA
DOI-BLM-WY-0000-2018-0003-EA**

September 17, 2018

**BLM-Wyoming
Third Quarter 2018 (Parts 1 & 2)
Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale**

Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Dr.
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Third Quarter 2018 (Parts 1 & 2) Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale
Environmental Assessments
DOI-BLM-WY-R000-2018-0001-EA
DOI-BLM-WY-P000-2018-0001-EA
DOI-BLM-WY-0000-2018-0003-EA

INTRODUCTION:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared Environmental Assessments (EAs) to address offering and issuing lease parcels within Wyoming at the BLM-Wyoming Third-Quarter 2018 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale (Parts 1 & 2). It is my decision to implement a combination of the alternatives considered in the EAs,¹ as described in the attached Decision Record (DR), and to offer 348 lease parcels (353,220.33 acres) with the applicable lease stipulations required under the approved Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

Should a successful bid be received and all other applicable requirements met, the BLM may lease the parcels. Standard terms and conditions as well as parcel-specific, no surface occupancy, timing limitation, and controlled surface use stipulations have been attached to the parcels as described in the EA. Lease stipulations were added to each parcel as identified by the BLM's interdisciplinary teams.

The EAs analyzed various alternatives, as supplemented or amended by an addendum attached to the Decision Record, including:

- DOI-BLM-WY-R000-2018-0001-EA – No Action and Proposed Action alternatives
- DOI-BLM-WY-P000-2018-0001-EA – No Action and Proposed Action alternatives
- DOI-BLM-WY-0000-2018-0003-EA – No Action, Proposed Action, and BLM-Modified alternatives

The EAs analyzing potential impacts from these alternatives in the Third-Quarter 2018 Sale (Parts 1 & 2) are attached.

FINDING OF NO (NEW) SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

Based upon a review of the EAs and the supporting documents (i.e., the governing land use plans), 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.

The environmental effects do not 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 applicable approved RMPs and their Final Environmental Impact Statements (FEISs). 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 Buffalo, Casper, Lander, Newcastle, Pinedale, Rawlins, Rock Springs, and Worland 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.

¹ See 43 CFR 46.420(c): "The Responsible Official must not consider alternatives beyond the range of alternatives discussed in the relevant environmental documents, but may select elements from several alternatives discussed."

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 Appendix 1 H-1790-1) and supplemental Instruction Memorandums, 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 alternatives would affect resources as described in the EAs. 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 EAs are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the applicable approved RMPs and their respective FEISs/RODs.

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

The decision is to offer lease parcels for sale. If the parcels are subsequently sold and the leases enter into an exploration or 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.

Unique characteristics present within the project area include historic and cultural resources, lands with wilderness characteristics, the Upper Green River Basin Ozone Non-attainment Area, and a State of Wyoming-designated big game migration corridor. These characteristics have been deemed to be not significantly adversely affected by the action alternatives with mitigating measures, such as the stipulations attached to the lease parcels. No aspect of the action alternatives would have an effect on cultural, wilderness, air, or biological resources at the time a lease parcel is offered. If the leases are issued and enter into an exploration and development stage, cultural, wilderness, air, and biological resources would be further addressed through site-specific NEPA compliance documentation and interdisciplinary evaluation.

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

Effects on the quality of the human environment are not expected to be significant or highly controversial. Site-specific NEPA compliance documentation and an environmental record of review (43 CFR § 3162.5-1(a)) will be prepared that address specific effects on resources at the time of operations. 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 EAs.

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. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EAs and the RMP FEISs to which the EAs tier. 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 would not result in any direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. While it is not possible to accurately quantify and predict potential impacts from the emission of GHGs in the affected areas as a result of offering the proposed public lands for lease, some general assumptions can be made: subsequent exploration and development of the proposed parcels will result in additional emissions

of GHGs, both direct and indirect. The total amount of emissions from the parcels to be offered cannot reasonably be foreseen and 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 the various GHG parameters is regulated by other Federal and state agencies, 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. Oil and gas leasing and post-lease development have been ongoing in the United States, including portions of the project 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 EAs and the BLM's interdisciplinary review did not reveal any cumulative effects beyond those already analyzed in the applicable RMPs/FEISs. 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 future actions. The EAs have projected the cumulative direct and indirect GHG emissions for the full Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenario in each field office. The proposed parcels represents less than one-tenth of one percent of the total federal mineral estate acreage in the State of Wyoming, 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. The BLM has determined that its analysis adequately addresses the potential 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 RFD scenario. Significant cumulative effects are not expected beyond what has been analyzed in the underlying RMPs, as amended.

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 review, including preparation of additional NEPA compliance documentation.

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.

Refer to the individual parcel descriptions and to the sensitive species controlled surface use stipulations in the EAs for a listing of the various sensitive species with the various parcels. Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to wildlife and fisheries have been incorporated into the design of the action alternatives, in conformance with the approved RMPs, as amended. Although listed species may occupy habitat within the project boundary, surface use restrictions, including timing limitation (TL), no surface occupancy (NSO), and controlled surface use (CSU) stipulations, as well as closed to leasing designations, will be applied to the lease parcels to avoid or reduce potential effects. Furthermore,

authorizations for future site-specific lease exploration and/or development operations (e.g., Applications for Permit to Drill (APDs), road/pipeline Right-of-Ways (ROWs)) could be encumbered by seasonal and surface use restrictions on a case-by-case basis, as required through project-specific NEPA compliance documentation or other environmental review, consistent with our regulations (see 43 CFR § 3101.1-2).

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.



Mary Jo Rugwell,
Wyoming State Director



Date