



### Update on the environmental impact statement (EIS) process

The 90-day public comment period for the draft EIS ended on April 20, 2023. The BLM is using the information gathered from public comments, along with input from cooperating agencies, to prepare the final EIS.

Brooklynn Cox, realty specialist with the BLM in Cedar City, Utah, has stepped in as project manager for the EIS process while Kasey Prestwich is on a 120-day detail as the Renewable Energy Program Coordinator with the BLM's Idaho State Office. Brooklynn will be working with the BLM's EIS project team to complete the analysis of public comments and prepare the final EIS.

Once completed, the BLM will publish a notice of availability for the final EIS in the *Federal Register* and post a digital copy of the final EIS on the project ePlanning website at <https://bit.ly/3EirxD>. The final EIS will provide the basis for the BLM's decision on the project. The BLM will publish a notice of availability for its Record of Decision (ROD) in the *Federal Register* 30 – 60 days after the publication of the final EIS.

### Updated NEPA EIS Schedule

<b>August 20, 2021</b>	— BLM initiates public scoping
<b>October 20, 2021</b>	— Scoping period ends
<b>January 20, 2023</b>	— Draft EIS released for comment Public comment period opens
<b>April 20, 2023</b>	— Public comment period ends
<b>Late Winter 2024</b>	— Final EIS released
<b>Spring 2024</b>	— ROD released



### Preliminary summary of public comments

The BLM received 11,179 comment submissions during the public comment period for the draft EIS. The comments provided a range of perspectives on recommended studies, methodologies, and preferred alternatives. The BLM appreciates all the time and effort that stakeholders have put into each comment submission. The BLM team, in coordination with SWCA, has read, categorized and is considering the information provided in the comments. The feedback provided through the comments will help to inform the BLM's assessment of the project and ensures the BLM has the information needed to take a hard look prior to preparing a decision.

A preliminary summary of the comments is available on ePlanning ([https://bit.ly/LavaRidge\\_PrelimDEIScmntRpt](https://bit.ly/LavaRidge_PrelimDEIScmntRpt)).

The summary provides a brief overview of the comments from the perspective of the commenters and doesn't provide an in-depth review and assessment of the facts or context for the comments. The information in the summary is intended to provide the reader with an understanding of the information included in the comments; it should not be considered as a factual conclusion of the information provided in the draft EIS. The final EIS will include the substantive comments with the BLM's response to those comments.



## Geotechnical investigation testing permit

On April 8, 2022, MVE filed an application for a land use permit with the BLM Shoshone Field Office requesting geotechnical sampling on public lands in Jerome, Lincoln, and Minidoka Counties, Idaho. The proposed survey activities would be conducted within the limits of the project area for the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project that is currently being evaluated by the BLM. The purpose of this limited geotechnical/geophysical investigation is to inform the engineering design for the Lava Ridge Wind Project.

The Lava Ridge geotechnical testing is a separate request from the Lava Ridge Wind Project. The permit, if authorized, could provide MVE with additional information as they continue to evaluate specific locations for siting turbines, powerlines, roads, and other associated infrastructures. If an authorization is issued, the permit would allow for the specific actions described for geotechnical sampling and would not authorize any additional development or set a precedent for authorization of additional permits or right-of-way.

There are three levels of review that the BLM can use for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): an EIS, an environmental assessment (EA), or a categorical exclusion (CX). Per 40 CFR 1501.3, the appropriate level of NEPA review is based on BLM determining if the proposed action does not have, is not likely to have, or is likely to have significant effects; CXs are categories of actions that Federal agencies have determined do not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and therefore do not require an EA or EIS (40 CFR 1501.4). Geotechnical testing is a common request to BLM, with similar types of applications having no significant effects. As a result, the BLM has determined that a CX is the appropriate level of NEPA review for the proposed geotechnical testing. The BLM will be issuing a decision associated with the analysis for this application. That decision will also identify the formal process if entities wish to challenge that decision.

Cultural resource surveys and vegetation surveys have been undertaken to understand the potential impacts of the geotechnical sampling. The BLM consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office regarding the cultural resource survey requirements, and cultural surveys were conducted in the presence of Tribal cultural specialist monitors. The BLM Shoshone Field Office sent a letter to interested parties on May 3, 2023 and accepted comments about the proposed permit through May 31, 2023.

## Ways to stay informed

You can sign up to be on the project mailing list: [forms.office.com/r/NDsr6rhtbs](https://forms.office.com/r/NDsr6rhtbs). Please include your name and all relevant contact information when you complete the form.

The BLM appreciates the comments it continues to receive about the Project. All comments are welcome and reviewed by BLM Project Managers. Please be aware, however, that only comments received during the public comment period for the draft EIS are being considered for formal response and consideration in the preparation of the final EIS.

Please contact Brooklynn Cox if you have any questions.

### For more information about the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project:

Brooklynn Cox, Project Manager (acting)  
BLM Shoshone Field Office  
400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352

**Phone:** 435-865-3073 **Email:** [BLM\\_ID\\_LavaRidge@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_ID_LavaRidge@blm.gov) **Website:** <https://bit.ly/3EirzxD>

