

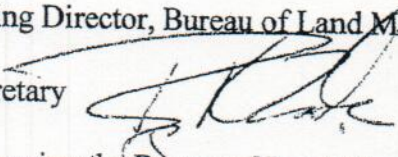


THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

MAR 27 2017

Memorandum

To: Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management

From: Secretary 

Subject: Improving the Bureau of Land Management's Planning and National Environmental Policy Act Processes

On March 27, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed H.J. Resolution 44, which immediately nullified the regulations known as Planning 2.0.

I have heard many concerns about this rule and about the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) planning and environmental analysis processes. These concerns must be addressed.

Land use planning and environmental analysis are essential to help promote and improve informed decisionmaking and to involve our state, local government, and tribal partners, as well the public in that process for our public lands.

However, important projects and decisions are sometimes excessively delayed and agency land and resource management actions languish in a quagmire of plans, studies, and regulatory reviews. Often these additional steps are not a crucial part of a successful planning effort, informing the public, or communicating the impacts and tradeoffs involved in a decision.

The BLM manages almost 13 percent of the surface area in the United States and roughly one-third of its mineral resources. There is little doubt that BLM has a big job in managing our public lands for a wide variety of activities. These activities contribute to the economic health and prosperity of states and local communities by creating jobs through multiple use. Yet each year, BLM spends \$48 million for the planning process and completes more than 5,000 documents to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Some of those funds and staff time would be better applied toward completing work on the ground and creating economic opportunities.

The feedback I have received from many of our state and local partners and the public is that the system is broken, unnecessarily lengthy and burdensome, and does not produce the result demanded by the American people. The result demanded is to have an effective, efficient, and transparent process that 1) takes less time, 2) costs less money, and 3) is more responsive to local needs. For these reasons, I am directing BLM to go back to the drawing board to define actionable items that will make a measurable impact on improving the Federal planning process.

Fostering a Good Neighbor Policy and Restoring the Multiple-Use Mission of the BLM

I hereby direct BLM, in accordance with its multiple-use mission, to immediately begin a focused effort to identify and implement results-oriented improvements to its land use planning and NEPA processes.

As part of this effort, BLM will identify where redundancies and inefficient processes exist and should be eliminated, while ensuring that we fulfill our legal and resource stewardship responsibilities. These concepts are not mutually exclusive and should guide BLM as it undertakes this effort. The BLM will take a hard look at all aspects of the planning process, including challenges with NEPA, and shall incorporate the views and ideas of our state and local partners in examining and implementing solutions that meet the following criteria:

1. Finding better ways to incorporate and partner with state planning efforts;
2. Reducing duplicative and disproportionate analyses;
3. Considering more user-friendly representation of the planning process so stakeholders can easily determine status;
4. Fostering greater transparency in the NEPA process, including proper accounting of timeframes, delays, and financial cost of NEPA analyses;
5. Seeking opportunities to avoid delays caused by appeals and litigation;
6. Building trust with our neighbors through better integration of the needs of state and local governments, tribal partners, and other stakeholders; and
7. Developing and implementing efforts to "right size" environmental documents instead of defaulting to preparing an Environmental Impact Statement in circumstances when such a document is not absolutely needed.

As BLM evaluates all potential solutions, it shall also include in its analysis how a new rulemaking will meet the aforementioned criteria. In conducting this analysis, BLM shall make every effort to restore order, focus, and efficiency to the Federal land planning process. These efforts will align with the President's and my priorities and values: Making America Safe through Energy Independence; Making America Great Through Shared Conservation Stewardship; Making America Safe – Restoring our Sovereignty; Getting America Back to Work; and Serving the American Family.

Please deliver a report to me by no later than 6 months from today that describes your progress and how it will benefit future planning decisions and activities. The report should also provide recommendations for any regulatory or legislative actions necessary to meet the above goals.