

adopted State or local plan, policy, or program. You explain in your appeal that the Utah Energy Policy emphasizes a diverse energy portfolio. The proposed updated Western Solar Plan appropriately balances the potential for development from both solar and geothermal sources of energy. First of all, where a current geothermal lease already exists, no solar right-of-way (ROW) may be issued that would interfere with the grantee's use of the public lands consistent with the terms and conditions of the geothermal lease. Where a solar project is proposed in an area with geothermal potential but no existing ROW, the BLM will assess the best use of the land subject to the proposal. In evaluating solar project applications, the BLM will consider and address the impacts of utility-scale solar development on the ability to exploit geothermal resources. I decline to adopt your recommendation that the BLM include a separate planning-level exclusion of lands with potential geothermal resources in the proposed RMPAs because it does not address an identified inconsistency with a Utah plan, and it is not prudent or necessary in light of the presence of further review at the implementation stage.

#### *Extent of Lands Available*

I have considered your concerns about the extent of lands available under the proposed updated Western Solar Plan but find that you have not identified an inconsistency with any approved or adopted State or local plan, policy, or program. Further, the BLM is proposing to identify an appropriate number of acres of public lands as available, both in Utah and the broader planning area for this effort. It is true that the scope of available areas goes well beyond the acreage that the BLM anticipates will be developed in fact based on the reasonably foreseeable development scenario (RFDS), but that approach to land allocation and management is appropriate. The proposed updated Western Solar Plan identifies over 5 million acres in Utah as available for future solar projects, whereas the RFDS estimates that slightly less than 40,000 acres of development is expected to occur in Utah by 2045. It is appropriate for broad-scale planning efforts to make orders-of-magnitude more lands available for a given use than the RFDS estimates would be put to that use. Complexity and controversy involved in navigating technical challenges, environmental concerns, community interests, and other potential uncertainties involved in the deliberative permitting process make

that approach prudent. Making significantly more acres available than the BLM estimates will be developed will help to ensure solar projects are not only sited for feasibility and legal compliance but also in a way that is environmentally responsible and works for local communities. The fact that more lands are allocated as available than the RFDS suggests will be developed in fact does not represent an inconsistency with the Utah plans identified in your appeal, and I therefore decline to adopt your recommendation to make the proposed RMPAs commensurate with the RFDS.

#### *Alleged Inconsistency With Treatment of Livestock Grazing Under State and County Plans*

The proposed updated Western Solar Plan appropriately balances use of the public lands for solar energy development and use of the public lands for livestock grazing, in keeping with the BLM's obligation to manage the public lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield. As your appeal recognizes, the proposed updated Western Solar Plan would not approve any solar project or result in the reduction of authorized unit months (AUM) associated with public land livestock grazing permits or leases in Utah. A future decision to issue a ROW for solar development within a grazing allotment would be subject to project-specific review and would need to comply with the applicable grazing regulations and the design features included as part of the proposed updated Western Solar Plan, including those, such as design feature LG-1, designed to minimize conflicts between solar development and grazing. To the extent that the potential for future reductions in AUMs resulting from solar ROW grants represents an inconsistency with the Utah or Beaver County Resource Management Plan, I considered your recommendation to add an exclusion criteria and additional design features related to livestock grazing. This recommendation does not provide for a reasonable balance between the national interest and the State's interest because the BLM has determined that the national interest in supporting use of public land for solar development is incompatible with an exclusion that would make all lands within grazing allotments unavailable.

#### *Conclusion*

I have found that no changes to the proposed updated Western Solar Plan are necessary in response to the issues raised in your appeal as they either do not identify inconsistencies with any

approved or adopted State or local plans, policies, or programs or do not provide for a reasonable balance between the State's interest and the national interest (43 CFR 1610.3-2(e)).

**Nada Wolff Culver,**

*Principal Deputy Director.*

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## **DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

### **Bureau of Land Management**

**[BLM NV FRN MO4540000292;  
NVNV106391927]**

### **Proposed Withdrawal and Public Meeting for the Amargosa Valley, Nevada**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed withdrawal.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary of the Interior proposes to withdraw 308,890 acres of Federal lands located in Nye County, Nevada, from location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, for 20 years, subject to valid existing rights. The area also includes approximately 40,000 acres, more or less, of non-Federal lands that would be subject to the withdrawal if they are subsequently acquired by the United States. The purpose of the proposed withdrawal is to protect the cultural, recreational, and biological resources of these lands. Publication of this notice temporarily segregates the lands for up to 2 years from location and entry under the United States mining laws and leasing under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights. The lands will remain open to disposal under the mineral materials laws. This notice initiates a 90-day public comment period and announces a public meeting on the proposed withdrawal, including input related to ongoing mining activities for sepiolite, saponite, and bentonite within the study area related to projected development of valid existing rights.

**DATES:** All Comments must be received by April 15, 2025.

The BLM will hold a Public Meeting on the withdrawal proposal on February 27, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. Pacific time at the Amargosa Community Center located at 1640 E. Amargosa Farm Road, Amargosa Valley, NV 89020.

**ADDRESSES:** All comments should be submitted to the BLM Pahrump Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Pahrump Field Office, Attn: Amargosa

Withdrawal, 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130, or via email at [blm\\_nv\\_sndo\\_amargosa@blm.gov](mailto:blm_nv_sndo_amargosa@blm.gov). The BLM will not consider comments via telephone calls.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Nicholas B. Pay, Field Manager, Pahrump Field Office at (702) 515-5042, or you may contact the BLM office at the address listed in the **ADDRESSES** section. Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The purpose of the proposed withdrawal is to protect the cultural, recreational, and biological resources of the lands proposed for withdrawal. The proposed withdrawal includes the federal lands within the area described below in Nye County, Nevada:

**Mount Diablo Meridian, Nevada**

- Tps. 14 thru 17 S., R. 48 E., partly unsurveyed, those portions lying southwesterly of the centerline of U.S. Highway No. 95.
- Tps. 15 thru 18 S., Rs. 49 and 50 E., those portions lying southwesterly of the centerline of U.S. Highway No. 95.
- T. 19 S., R. 50 E.
- Tps. 15 thru 18 S., R. 51 E., partly unsurveyed, those portions lying southwesterly of the centerline of U.S. Highway No. 95.
- T. 19 S., R. 51 E., Secs. 1 thru 18.
- T. 16 S., R. 52 E., Secs. 7 thru 10, secs. 15 thru 22, and secs. 27 thru 34, those portions lying southwesterly of the centerline of U.S. Highway No. 95.
- T. 17 S., R. 52 E., Secs. 3 thru 10, secs. 15 thru 22, and secs. 26 thru 35.
- T. 18 S., R. 52 E., Secs. 2 thru 10, secs. 15 thru 21, and secs. 29 thru 32.
- T. 19 S., R. 52 E., Secs. 5 thru 8 and secs. 17 and 18.

**San Bernadino Meridian, Nevada**

- T. 25 N., R. 7 E., Secs. 4, 5, and 6.
- T. 26 N., R. 7 E., Sec. 31.

The area described, including both Federal and non-Federal land, contains 308,890 acres, more or less, as derived from Bureau of Land Management GIS data. No part of this description shall be construed to impact surface rights to non-Federal land or existing valid

claims to Federal subsurface mineral estate.

Non-Federal lands included in the description above would be subject to the proposed withdrawal only if they are subsequently acquired by the United States.

The Secretary of the Interior approved the BLM's petition. Therefore, the petition/application constitutes a withdrawal proposal of the Secretary of the Interior (43 CFR 2310.1-3(e)).

The use of a right-of-way, interagency agreement, or cooperative agreement would not adequately constrain non-discretionary uses and would not provide adequate protection for the cultural, recreational, and biological resources in this area.

No additional water rights would be needed to fulfill the purpose of the proposed withdrawal.

There are no suitable alternative sites as the described lands contain the resource values to be protected.

Records relating to the withdrawal proposal may be examined by contacting the BLM at the address and phone number provided above in this notice.

For a 90-day period from the date of publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, all persons who wish to submit comments in connection with the proposed withdrawal may present their views in writing to the address or email above, including comments or input related to on-going mining activities for sepiolite, saponite, and bentonite within the proposed withdrawal area related to projected development of valid existing rights. Information regarding the proposed withdrawal will be available for public review at the BLM's Southern Nevada District Office, during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives of officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Notice is hereby given that the BLM will hold a Public Meeting on February 27, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. Pacific time at the

Amargosa Community Center located at 1640 East Amargosa Farm Road, Amargosa Valley, Nevada 89020.

For a period until January 15, 2027, the Federal lands described in this notice will be segregated from location and entry under the United States mining laws and from leasing under the mineral or geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights, unless the application is denied or canceled, or the withdrawal is approved prior to that date.

Licenses, permits, cooperative agreements, or discretionary land use authorizations of a temporary nature that will not significantly impact the values to be protected by the proposed withdrawal may be allowed with the approval of the authorized officer of the BLM during the temporary segregation period.

The withdrawal proposal will be processed in accordance with the regulations set forth in 43 CFR 2300.

(Authority: 43 U.S.C. 1714)

**Jon K. Raby,**  
State Director.

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

[PO #4820000251]

**Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan for the North Dakota Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, North Dakota**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) and Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) for North Dakota. The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management signed the ROD on January 8, 2025, which constitutes the decision of the BLM and makes the Approved RMP effective immediately.

**DATES:** The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management signed the ROD/Approved RMP on January 8, 2025.

**ADDRESSES:** The ROD/Approved RMP is available online at the BLM National Environmental Policy Act Register at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1505069/570>. A printed copy of the ROD/Approved RMP will also be