



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wyoming State Office
P.O. Box 1828
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003-1828

In Reply Refer To:

1310 (100)

January 31, 2005

Dear Reader:

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the proposed Jonah Infill Drilling Project is submitted for your review and comment. This DEIS has been prepared to analyze the potential impacts of the drilling and production operations of natural gas wells and associated access roads, pipelines, and production facilities proposed by several companies within the proposed project area located in Sublette County, Wyoming.

Three technical support documents have also been prepared in conjunction with the DEIS. These documents contain detailed technical information for (1) air quality modeling, (2) socio-economic modeling, and (3) development procedures including transportation plan, reclamation plan, and hazard materials management plan. A limited number of technical support documents are available upon request. They will also be available for review at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) offices listed below. The DEIS and its technical support documents may be viewed or downloaded from the BLM State website at www.wy.blm.gov.

Bureau of Land Management
Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road.
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009

Bureau of Land Management
Pinedale Field Office
432 E. Mill St., PO Box 768
Pinedale, Wyoming 82941

The Jonah Infill Drilling Project Area (JIDPA) includes 30,500 acres with surface ownership at approximately 94 percent Federal (28,580 acres), 2 percent private (640 acres), and 4 percent State of Wyoming (1,280 acres). Currently within the JIDPA, there are 501 producing and shut-in natural gas wells and an extensive infrastructure of roads and pipelines for natural gas production in place.

Ten alternatives were analyzed. The Proposed Action proposes to develop the natural gas resource by drilling up to 3,100 new wells on up to 16,200 acres of new surface disturbance over the next 12 years. To support gas field production the Proposed Action includes development infrastructure such as roads, pipelines, water wells, and other ancillary facilities needed to link the wells with existing transportation systems.

Under the No Action Alternative, the effects of limiting development in the JIDPA to those that have been analyzed in previous environmental documents for the Jonah II Field and Modified Jonah II Project Area are considered and provide a basis for comparison of alternatives.

Alternative A proposes to develop 3,100 new wells on up to 3,100 new well pads over the same time period with the same additional infrastructure, with some lease stipulation and conditions of approval removed to facilitate recovery of natural gas. Alternative B proposes to develop up to 3,100 new wells from the currently-authorized 497 well pads at varying paces of development. Alternatives C through G each propose varying amounts of surface disturbance, well pad (surface) density restrictions, and paces of development.

The Agency Preferred Alternative proposed field development based on performance objectives and three management areas with different percentages of surface disturbance.

If you wish to submit comments on the DEIS, we request that you make them as specific as possible. Comments will be more helpful if they include suggested changes, sources, or methodologies. Comments that contain only opinions, or preferences, will not receive a formal response. However, they will be considered and included as part of the BLM decisionmaking process.

Following the publication of this DEIS the BLM will host an open house in Pinedale, Wyoming. All meetings, or hearings, and any other public involvement activities will be announced at least 15 days in advance through public notices, media news releases, and or mailings.

This DEIS was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and other regulations and statutes to address possible environmental and socio-economic impacts which could result from the project. This DEIS is not a decision document. Its purpose is to inform the public of the impacts associated with implementing the companies' drilling proposal, to evaluate alternatives to the proposal, and to solicit public comments. This DEIS also provides information to other regulatory agencies for use in their decisionmaking processes for other permits required for implementation of the project.

Freedom of Information Act Considerations: Public comments submitted for this DEIS, including the names and street addresses of respondents, will be made available for review after the comment period closes at the Pinedale Field Office during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Public comments will be published as part of the Final EIS. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Please retain this copy of the DEIS for future reference as the Final EIS may be published in an abbreviated format. A copy of the DEIS has been sent to affected Federal, State, and local government agencies, and to those persons who have indicated that they wished to receive a copy of the DEIS. Copies of the DEIS are available for public inspection at the BLM offices listed below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alan L. Kesterke".

for Robert A. Bennett
State Director