

geophysical exploration, exploratory drilling, production, and transportation of nonfederal oil and gas resources in the park. It will also provide a greater degree of certainty to operators, since it provides up-front information on the location of Sensitive Resource Areas and suggests needed mitigation. Current legal and policy requirements would be a basis component of any alternative selected. Current legal and policy requirements means the application of all pertinent federal and state laws, regulations, policies, and direction governing oil and gas operations conducted in the park. These include NPS regulations at 36 CFR 9B, which require operators to use technology and methods least damaging to park resources while ensuring the protection of human health and safety.

Alternative A, Proposed Action, is the agency's Preferred Alternative. Under Alternative A, Sensitive Resource Areas (SRAs) would be formally designated comprising 68,731 acres or 53 percent of the park, in which no surface occupancy or specific restricted access for oil and gas operations would be applied. SRAs are areas that are particularly sensitive to adverse impacts from oil and gas activities. Generally, geophysical (seismic) exploration could be allowed in SRAs under current legal and policy requirements. In all other areas of the park, oil and gas activities would be permitted under current legal and policy requirements. Alternative B, No Action/Current Management, describes the current management strategy, and provides a baseline to compare Alternatives A and C. Under Alternative B, nonfederal oil and gas operations could be permitted in all areas (100 percent) of the park by applying current legal and policy requirements. Under Alternative B, areas that are particularly susceptible to adverse impacts from oil and gas operations would be identified on a case-by-case basis during development and review of plans of operations, during which mitigation measures would be implemented as needed. Under Alternative C, Sensitive Resource Areas would be formally designated (similar to Alternative A), comprising 68,731 acres or 53 percent of the park, and maximum resource protection would be provided these areas by applying a "no surface access" stipulation within all SRAs. In all other areas of the park, oil and gas activities would be permitted by applying current legal and policy requirements. Under both Alternatives A and C, where surface access is restricted in SRAs, directional drilling technology to reach a bottomhole target underneath an SRA

from a surface location outside an SRA, or to place a pipeline under an SRA to avoid surface impacts, would also be permitted.

The FEIS/O&GMP evaluates the environmental consequences of the proposed action and the other alternatives on oil and gas exploration and development, air quality, soils and water resources, floodplains, vegetation, wetlands, fish and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and visitor experience.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Superintendent, Padre Island National Seashore, at the above address and telephone number.

Dated: February 28, 2000.

**John A. King,**

*Acting Director, Intermountain Region,  
National Park Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Reclamation

#### Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for upper Rio Grande basin water operations.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) with and on behalf of other joint-lead agencies [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Department of Defense; and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (Commission), State of New Mexico] intends to prepare an EIS on water operations in the Rio Grande Basin above Fort Quitman, Texas. The preparation of the EIS will be integral to the Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review (Review). It is anticipated that a plan for water operations at existing Reclamation and Corps facilities will be developed.

**DATES:** Public scoping meetings will be scheduled at locations throughout the upper Rio Grande basin between June 1 and September 30, 2000. Specific information regarding location and times of these meetings will be published in the **Federal Register** at least 15 days in advance of the meetings.

The estimated date that the EIS will be completed and released for public review is February 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Questions or comments regarding the Review and EIS may be directed to Mr. Chris Gorbach, Bureau of Reclamation, 505 Marquette, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102-2162. Email: cgorbach@uc.usbr.gov.

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home address from public disclosure, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. There also may be circumstances in which we would withhold a respondent's identity from public disclosure, as allowable by law. If you wish us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure in their entirety.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Chris Gorbach, Bureau of Reclamation, telephone (505) 248-5379. Email: cgorbach@uc.usbr.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Under various existing legal authorities, and subject to allocation of supplies and priority of water rights under State law, Reclamation and the Corps operate dams, reservoirs, and other facilities in the upper Rio Grande basin to:

- (1) Store and deliver water for agricultural, domestic, municipal, industrial, and environmental uses;
- (2) Assist the Commission in meeting downstream water delivery obligations mandated by the Rio Grande Compact;
- (3) Provide flood protection and sediment control; and
- (4) Comply with existing law, contract obligations, and international treaty.

The Review will be the basis of, and integral to, preparation of the EIS. The purpose of the Review and EIS is to:

- (1) Identify flexibilities in operation of Federal reservoirs and facilities in the upper Rio Grande basin that are within existing authorities of Reclamation, the Corps, and the Commission, and in compliance with State and Federal law;
- (2) Develop a better understanding of how these facilities could be operated more efficiently and effectively as an integrated system;
- (3) Formulate a plan for future water operations at these facilities that is within the existing authorities of Reclamation, the Corps, and the Commission; complies with State, Federal, and other applicable laws and regulations; and assures continued safe dam operations;

(4) Improve processes for making decisions about water operations through better interagency communications and coordination, and facilitation of public review and input; and

(5) Support compliance of the Corps, Reclamation, and the Commission with applicable law and regulations, including, but not limited to, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The EIS will address water operations at the following facilities with the noted exceptions and limitations.

- Flood control operations at Platoro Reservoir (the Review and EIS will include only flood control operations at Platoro that are under Corps authority. Water supply operations at Platoro are under local control.)

- Closed Basin Division—San Luis Valley Project.

- Heron Dam and Reservoir.
- Abiquiu Dam and Reservoir.
- Cochiti Dam and Reservoir.
- Jemez Canyon Dam and Reservoir.
- Low Flow Conveyance Channel.
- Flood control operations at

Elephant Butte Dam and Reservoir (because of current litigation, water supply operations at Elephant Butte will not be included in the Review or EIS).

- Flood control operations at Caballo Dam and Reservoir (because of current litigation, water supply operations at Caballo will not be included in the Review or EIS).

The EIS will present alternatives for exercise of discretionary authority of Reclamation, the Corps, and the Commission with respect to water operations at these facilities and evaluate the environmental, economic, and social effects of these alternatives. Some of the issues to be considered include changing channel capacity criteria at Albuquerque, maintenance or non-maintenance of a sediment pool at Jemez Canyon Dam, storage or non-storage of Rio Grande water in authorized San Juan-Chama space in Abiquiu Reservoir, and operation of the low flow conveyance channel.

Coordination is ongoing with both public and private entities having jurisdiction or an interest in water operations in the upper Rio Grande basin. Fact sheets and briefings were presented at several public forums prior to this Notice. In July 1999 pueblos and tribes, State, Federal, and local agencies were invited to participate in the Review and preparation of the EIS. The Corps, Reclamation, and the Commission, as lead agencies, signed in January 2000 a Memorandum of Agreement to define the scope of the Review and EIS and to establish their

roles and responsibilities relating to completing the Review and EIS in accordance with NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and other laws and regulations. To date, the Pueblo of San Juan, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Colorado State Engineer (as Rio Grande Compact Commissioner), New Mexico Environment Department, and New Mexico Department of Agriculture have responded in writing that they will participate as cooperating agencies. Many others have indicated their interest in participating through the public involvement process or by participating on technical analysis teams. The joint lead agencies will seek and encourage public involvement throughout the project. The responsibilities of Reclamation, the Corps, and Commission include conducting public scoping meetings throughout the basin, EIS comment hearings, and other outreach activities.

The environmental evaluation will assess the potential effects that the proposed water operations alternatives may have on Indian Trust Assets, and minority and low income populations.

Dated: February 22, 2000.

**Charles A. Calhoun,**

*Regional Director, Upper Colorado Region.*

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## OVERSEAS PRIVATE INVESTMENT CORPORATION

### Agency Report Form Under OMB Review

**AGENCY:** Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

**ACTION:** Request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), agencies are required to publish a notice in the **Federal Register** notifying the public that the Agency has prepared an information collection request for OMB review and approval and has requested public review and comment on the submission. OPIC published its first **Federal Register** notice on this information collection request on December 28, 1999, in 64 FR 72677, at which time a 60-calendar day comment period was announced. The comment period ended February 29, 2000. No comments were received in response to this notice.

The information collection submission has now been submitted to OMB for review. Comments are again being solicited on the need for the

information, its practical utility, the accuracy of the Agency's burden estimate, and on ways to minimize the reporting burden, including automated collection techniques and uses of other forms of technology. The proposed form under review is summarized below.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before April 6, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the subject form and the request for review prepared for submission to OMB may be obtained from the Agency Submitting Officer. Comments on the form should be submitted to the OMB Reviewer.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

*OPIC Agency Submitting Officer*

Carol Brock, Records Manager, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, 1100 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20527; 202/336-8563.

*OMB Reviewer*

David Rostker, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, New Executive Office Building, Docket Library, Room 10102, 725 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20503, 202/395-3897.

### Summary of Form Under Review

*Type of Request:* Extension of currently approved form.

*Title:* Application for Political Risk Investment Insurance.

*Form Number:* OPIC-52.

*Frequency of Use:* Once per investor per project.

*Type of Respondents:* Business or other institutions (except farms); individuals.

*Standard Industrial Classification Codes:* All.

*Description of Affected Public:* U.S. companies or citizens investing overseas.

*Reporting Hours:* 6 hours per project.

*Number of Responses:* 160 per year.

*Federal Cost:* \$3,200 per year.

*Authority for Information Collection:* Sections 231, 234(a), 239(d), and 240A of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

*Abstract (Needs and Uses):* The application is the principal document used by OPIC to determine the investor's and project's eligibility, assess the environmental impact and developmental effects of the project, measure the economic effects for the United States and the host country economy, and collect information for underwriting analysis.