

formation in this area could be developed at a spacing of one well every 40 acres or 16 wells per square mile. The DEIS analysis addresses three critical criteria bearing on how and to what extent development in the PAPA could proceed. The criteria include: three exploration/development scenarios which define over what portion of the PAPA (none, all, or just a portion) development could occur; two levels of development which define the number of well pads which could be developed in the next 10 to 15 years; and two mitigation alternatives which define options for reducing impacts to the environment from future development activities. Mitigation alternatives are evaluated based on their application on just Federal lands and minerals, as well as on all lands and minerals in the PAPA (Federal, State and private). The PAPA surface ownership is approximately 80 percent Federal, 15 percent private, and 5 percent State. A small infrastructure of roads and pipelines for natural gas production are already in place within the PAPA. Additional roads and pipelines would be necessary to link the new wells with the existing transportation systems.

The PAPA Operators' plans and drilling schedules would be contingent upon an adequate price for the gas at the wellhead and anticipated increases in gas consumption in the United States. The American Gas Association estimates a 40 percent increase by the year 2015.

Potential impacts of concern from the proposed development (not in priority order) are: sensitive view sheds; economic, social, health, and safety effects to Pinedale and surrounding communities; livestock operations; recreation use associated with the Mesa; crucial big game winter range and antelope migrations; sage grouse and raptor breeding and nesting; special status plant and wildlife species; soil erosion and sediment increases to the New Fork and Green Rivers; groundwater draw down and contamination; Historic Lander Trail condition and view shed; and cumulative effects.

This DEIS, in compliance with Section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (as amended), includes the Biological Assessment for the purpose of identifying any endangered, threatened, or proposed species which are likely to be affected by the proposed action.

A Technical Report Document has also been prepared in conjunction with the DEIS. It contains detailed technical information regarding air quality

modeling, wildlife habitat modeling, cultural resources, and potential well pad location adjustments due to surface resource restrictions. A limited number of the technical report documents are available upon request or they may be reviewed at the BLM offices listed above.

Comments, including the names and street addresses of respondents, will be made available for review by the public at the addresses listed above during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and will be published as part of the Final EIS. However, individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and/or street 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.

Dated: November 18, 1999.

Alan R. Pierson,
State Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CO-935-4214-ET; COC-23841]

Proposed Extension of Withdrawal; Opportunity for Public Meeting; Colorado

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, proposes to extend Public Land Order No. 5718 for another 20-year period. This order withdrew National Forest System land from location and entry under the mining laws to protect the Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel on Interstate Highway 70. The land has been and remains open to Forest management and to mineral leasing. This notice also gives an opportunity to comment on the proposed action and to request a public meeting.

DATES: Comments and requests for a public meeting must be received by February 22, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Comments and meeting requests should be sent to the Colorado State Director, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Doris E. Chelius at 303-239-3706.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 9, 1999, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, requested that Public Land Order No. 5718 be extended for an additional 20-year period. This withdrawal was made to protect public safety and public investment in the Eisenhower/Johnson Memorial Tunnel on Interstate Highway 70. This highway is an important part of the transportation system between the east and west slopes of the Continental Divide in Colorado. Public Land Order 5718 will expire on April 13, 2000.

The withdrawal comprises approximately 1,365 acres of National Forest System land. It is located in T. 4 S., R. 76 W., (unsurveyed) at the West Portal and above the Tunnel, and is described in Public Land Order 5718 and is located in Summit and Clear Creek Counties. A complete description of the lands can be provided by the Colorado State Office at the address shown above.

For a period of 90 days from the date of publication of this notice, all persons who wish to submit comments, suggestions, or objections in connection with the proposed extension may present their views in writing to the Colorado State Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

Notice is hereby given that an opportunity for a public meeting is afforded in connection with this proposed extension. All interested persons who desire a public meeting for the purpose of being heard on the proposal should submit a written request to the Colorado State Director within 90 days from the date of publication of this notice. If the authorized officer determines that a public meeting will be held, a notice of the time and place will be published in the **Federal Register** at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

This extension will be processed in accordance with regulations set forth in 43 CFR part 2310.

Jenny L. Saunders,
Realty Officer.

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