

annually construct a snow trail and transport goods across Refuge lands and waters between the Refuge's western boundary and KIC's inholdings near Kaktovik. The ROW permit would accommodate two routes—a shore fast sea ice route and an overland route—along with three connecting routes that join the overland and shore fast sea ice routes between Simpson Cove and Anderson Point (see Map 4 in Appendix 3 in draft EA). Vehicles could move between the sea ice and overland routes at these three locations. Both routes and all three connectors could be utilized, at any time, each season.

The overland route would cross 49.6 miles of Refuge lands and waters before reaching the applicant's inholding. The shore fast sea ice route would cross 42.9 miles of Refuge lands and waters before reaching the applicant's inholding. Shore fast sea ice is defined as sea ice that is grounded or on less than 3 meters of water to the seabed. The three connecting routes would cross 4.3 miles of Refuge lands and waters in total. The ROW would be 200-feet in width along the 96.8 miles of Refuge lands and waters. The footprint of the ROW would total 2,355 acres in which KIC would construct an annual 30-foot-wide snow trail.

Public Review Process

In accordance with the direction provided in Executive Order (E.O.) 14154 and the subsequent rescission of the Council of Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, in July 2025, the Department of the Interior issued updated NEPA procedures. E.O. 14154 directs all agencies to prioritize efficiency and certainty and avoid and minimize delays and ambiguity in the permitting process. The Department's July NEPA procedures clarify that NEPA does not require public involvement when a bureau prepares an EA, and for that reason, FWS has discretion to determine whether to involve the public, when to involve the public, and what kind of public involvement is most appropriate. To comply with this Presidential directive and updated Departmental NEPA procedures, the FWS has determined to reduce the previously noticed public comment period for this EA from 45 days to 15 days. This serves the dual purpose of compliance with updated Departmental NEPA procedures while still offering the public the opportunity to review and comment on this EA.

Request for Public Comments

You may submit written comments and materials concerning the draft EA

by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. Comments previously submitted need not be resubmitted, as they will be fully considered.

Public Availability of Comments

If you submit a comment via <https://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment, including any personal identifying information such as your address, phone number, and email address, will be posted on the website. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We will post all hardcopy comments on <https://www.regulations.gov>.

Tribal Consultation and Comment

The meaningful input of Alaska Native Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations is of critical importance to the draft EA. Therefore, and as expressed in Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," the Federal officials that have been delegated authority by the Secretary are committed to honoring the unique government-to-government political relationship that exists between the Federal Government and federally recognized Tribes. Consultation with Alaska Native Corporations is based on Public Law 108-199, div. H, sec. 161, January 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 452, as amended by Public Law 108-447, div. H, title V, sec. 518, December 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3267, which provides that: "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget and all Federal agencies shall hereafter consult with Alaska Native corporations on the same basis as Indian Tribes under Executive Order No. 13175." FWS will hold individual consultation meetings upon request. The Secretary of the Interior will consider Alaska Native Tribes' and Alaska Native Corporations' information, input, and recommendations, and address their concerns as much as practicable.

Authority

We publish this notice under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), and the Department of the Interior's implementing regulations and procedures at 43 CFR 46, as well as in compliance with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, as amended (ANILCA; Pub. L. 96-487,

sec. 1302(h), Dec. 2, 1980; 16 U.S.C. 3192(h).

Sara Boario,

Regional Director, Alaska Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2026-01252 Filed 1-22-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4333-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS-R3-ES-2025-0245; FXES1113030000-256-FF03E00000]

Application for Enhancement of Survival Permit, University of Illinois at Chicago; Draft Conservation Benefit Agreement for Eleven Bumble Bee Species

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have received an application from University of Illinois at Chicago (applicant), for an enhancement of survival (EOS) permit under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA). The application is supported by the proposed "Nationwide Conservation Benefit Agreement for Bumble Bees on Energy and Transportation Lands" (CBA) in the conterminous 48 United States. The intent of the CBA is to provide non-Federal landowners in the covered area with the opportunity to voluntarily conserve the covered species and associated habitat while carrying out ongoing operations in a manner that would result in a net conservation benefit to the species. We have made a preliminary determination that the CBA and permit application are eligible for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The basis for this determination is contained in a categorical exclusion checklist, which is available for public review. If approved, the EOS permit would be for a 35-year period following the signature of the EOS and would authorize the incidental take of the endangered rusty patched bumble bee and endangered Franklin's bumble bee. The EOS would also authorize the incidental take of the American bumble bee, variable cuckoo bumble bee, western bumble bee, Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee, crotch bumble bee, southern plains bumble bee, Morrison bumble bee, yellow banded bumble bee, and Ashton's cuckoo bumble bee, if any of these species were to be listed under the ESA.

DATES: We must receive written comments on the application by February 23, 2026.

ADDRESSES:

Obtaining Documents: The documents this notice announces, as well as any comments and materials that we receive, will be available for public inspection online in Docket No. FWS–R3–ES–2025–0245 at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

Submitting Comments: If you wish to submit comments on any of the documents, you may do so in writing by one of the following methods:

- *Online:* <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS–R3–ES–2025–0245.
- *U.S. Mail:* Public Comments Processing; Attn: Docket No. FWS–R3–ES–2025–0245; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; MS: PRB/3W; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathryn Bulliner, Section 10 Supervisory Biologist, Division of Endangered Species, Midwest Regional Office; telephone 573–476–9136, email kathryn_bulliner@fws.gov. 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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), make available for public comment an application we received from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) for an enhancement of survival permit (permit) under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) supported by the CBA and the associated draft categorical exclusion checklist. The permit application includes an integrated draft CBA for the rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), Franklin’s bumble bee (*B. franklini*), American bumble bee (*B. pennsylvanicus*), variable cuckoo bumble bee (*B. variabilis*), western bumble bee (*B. occidentalis*), Suckley’s cuckoo bumble bee (*B. suckleyi*), crotch bumble bee (*B. crotchii*), southern plains bumble bee (*B. fraternus*), Morrison bumble bee (*B. morrisoni*), yellow banded bumble bee (*B. terricola*), and Ashton’s cuckoo bumble bee (*B. ashtoni*) (hereafter collectively referred to as the Covered Species) throughout the 48 conterminous United States.

The CBA and associated permit would implement a voluntary conservation strategy developed by the UIC for energy and transportation activities on enrolled lands. These activities include conservation measures to restore, maintain, enhance, or create habitat for the Covered Species, as well as activities to conduct on-going maintenance, management, and minor modernization activities within existing rights-of-way and associated lands. The intent of the CBA is to provide non-Federal landowners with the opportunity to voluntarily conserve bumble bees and their habitat on enrolled properties while carrying out their operations in a manner that would result in a net conservation benefit to the Covered Species.

We also announce the availability of a draft categorical exclusion checklist supporting our determination that the proposed action qualifies for a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). We are making the permit application, including the draft CBA, and draft categorical exclusion checklist, available for public review and comment.

Background

A CBA is an agreement with the Service in which private and other non-Federal landowners voluntarily agree to undertake on-going management activities and conservation efforts on their properties to enhance, restore, or maintain habitat to benefit species that are either listed or at-risk for listing under the ESA. The Service works with these partners to identify threats to Covered Species, plan the measures needed to address the threats and conserve these species, identify willing landowners, develop agreements, and design and implement conservation measures and monitor their effectiveness. In return for managing their lands to the benefit of the species covered by the CBA, participating property owners receive assurances that the Service will not require additional or different conservation measures to be undertaken by the permittee without their consent as described in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 50 CFR 17.22(c)(5) and 17.32(c)(5).

The Service provides these assurances through an enhancement of survival (EOS) permit, issued pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA for a specific number of years, that becomes effective for listed species upon issuance. For non-listed Covered Species, the take authorized through the permit becomes effective upon the effective date of the species’ listing provided the permittee

signed the permit within 90 calendar days of issuance and has properly implemented the conservation benefit agreement since signing the permit. Under the permit, participating landowners also receive authorization for take that is incidental to activities covered by the CBA. In a case such as this, in which a third-party would administer the CBA, the permit is issued to the third-party administrator, the UIC in this case, and permit coverage extends to non-Federal landowners who enroll in the agreement through a Certificate of Inclusion (CI) and comply with the requirements stated in the agreement and their respective CIs. Additional permit application requirements and issuance criteria for CBAs are found in 50 CFR 17.22(c) and 17.32(c), respectively, as well as 50 CFR part 13.

Because the CBA participants’ rights-of-way may cross Federal as well as non-Federal lands, the UIC is proposing an integrated CBA approach modeled after the “Nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement for Monarch Butterfly on Energy and Transportation Lands” and associated EOS permit to provide a seamless implementation of the conservation strategy across enrolled non-Federal and Federal lands at a landscape level.

While the integrated agreement applies throughout enrolled lands, neither Federal agencies nor non-Federal partners would receive EOS permit coverage or “assurances” on activities conducted on enrolled lands that cross Federal property. Although there are no assurances associated with Federal lands, enrollees have a high degree of certainty that no additional conservation measures, beyond those contained in this CBA, will be required on Federal lands for listed and any at-risk Covered Species that becomes listed under the ESA in the future. The CBA provides a conservation strategy that results in a net conservation benefit to bumble bee species throughout the lands enrolled in the agreement. Private and non-Federal partners in energy and transportation sectors are encouraged to enter the CBA through the UIC.

Proposed Action

The proposed action involves the issuance of a section 10(a)(1)(A) EOS permit by the Service to UIC and approval of the proposed CBA. The purpose of these agreements and permits are to implement a conservation strategy that benefits Covered Species throughout their range in the conterminous United States. The UIC would administer the CBA and enroll eligible applicants, who would hold CIs,

as described in the CBA. The CBA and associated permit are proposed to cover 35 years from the time the EOS permit is signed.

Under the proposed CBA, UIC and partners who enroll into the agreement through UIC would create, enhance, and maintain Covered Species foraging, nesting, and overwintering habitat, as well as continue on-going activities supporting operations of energy and transportation sectors, including general operations, vegetation management, and maintenance and minor modernization activities within existing rights-of-way and associated lands. The proposed CBA does not include construction and land disturbing activities that pose significant environmental, socioeconomic, historical or cultural impacts (for example, new interstate highways, new pipelines, new transmission lines, new rail routes, or similar).

Partners enrolled in the CBA through UIC would hold a CI and be authorized for incidental take and assurances for the Covered Species on non-Federal lands. Where enrolled partners have property interests across Federal lands, incidental take may be authorized through Section 7 of the ESA. The biological opinion and conference opinion the Service will prepare for this CBA can inform and help streamline future consultations involving partners' activities on Federal lands. The conservation strategy contained in this CBA creates a net conservation benefit, giving partners a high degree of certainty that additional conservation measures or limitations, above those contained in the CBA and CIs, will not be required in the future for Covered Species on Federal lands.

The conservation measures in this agreement were designed to meet the net conservation benefit standard specifically for lands managed by the energy and transportation sectors. Unlike many other lands in the U.S., those lands are already actively managed to prevent the growth of trees and woody vegetation. This results in lands that are generally maintained as grassland, meadow, prairie, or shrub-scrub type habitats, all of which provide habitat for species, such as the bumble bee species covered in the CBA, that depend on early successional plant communities and structures. We have worked with UIC to design conservation measures expected to have a net conservation benefit to the Covered Species within the covered area; however, landowners and enrollees would not have to conduct every conservation measure in this list for their actions to have a net conservation

benefit on the Covered Species. To maintain a net conservation benefit, each partner must use selected conservation measures to create and maintain a proportion of their enrolled lands as bumble bee habitat each year. Each partner will need to follow their individual CIs and the conservation measures included within. Some examples of these conservation actions include the following: (1) establishing and using native seed mixes containing a diversity of native wildflowers, (2) avoidance of known or observed nest sites, (3) removing woody plants in densely covered shrub areas and invasive plant species to promote grassland habitats, (4) sustaining idle lands with suitable habitat for bumble bees, (5) using conservation mowing to enhance floral resources and habitat.

Covered Area

This agreement encompasses a covered area consisting of energy and transportation lands within the Covered Species' ranges across the lower 48 states of the U.S. Within this covered area, Partners may enroll their energy and transportation lands. Although the covered area spans 48 United States, only a portion of this area will be enrolled in the agreement. Enrollment of lands under this agreement is voluntary. The partners reasonably expect that Covered Species may occur in all or a portion of habitats on enrolled lands where management actions will be undertaken in accordance with this agreement. This agreement will cover those properties that have existing, historic, or potential suitable habitat for Covered Species across their range. Enrolled lands may include all or some combination of suitable habitat types or areas with the potential to create those habitats.

National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

This issuance of a section 10(a)(1)(A) permit is a federal action subject to NEPA compliance. The Service's decision on whether to enter the proposed CBA is a federal action subject to NEPA compliance. The UIC's proposed CBA and related application for the EOS permit is eligible for categorical exclusion under NEPA.

As required by NEPA, we considered impacts to the human environment that would result from issuance of the requested permit. Entering the CBA is strictly a voluntary action for landowners, and the covered activities under the permit are generally activities already occurring on these properties (e.g., general operations, vegetation management, and maintenance and

minor modernization activities within existing rights-of-way and associated lands). As explained in the categorical exclusion checklist, we believe the agreement will cause no or negligible environmental disturbance and qualifies for categorical exclusion under NEPA as provided by the Department of the Interior Manual (516 DM 8.5(c)(1)). The proposed CBA sustains, creates, and enhances Covered Species foraging, nesting, and overwintering habitat; addresses ongoing maintenance and minor modernization activities; and does not include construction and land disturbing activities that pose significant environmental, socioeconomic, historical or cultural impacts (e.g., new interstate highways, new pipelines, new transmission lines, new rail routes, or similar). Therefore, we are proposing to categorically exclude this action from further analysis under NEPA.

Next Steps

We specifically request information and comments from the public via this notice on our proposed Federal action to enter the proposed CBA and issue an EOS permit for the Covered Species. Further, we specifically solicit information regarding the adequacy of the agreement per 50 CFR parts 13 and 17.

We will evaluate the enhancement of survival permit application, including the agreement and any comments we receive, to determine whether the application meets the requirements of section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA. We will also evaluate whether the section 10(a)(1)(A) enhancement of survival permit would comply with section 7 of the ESA by conducting an intra-Service section 7 consultation. If we determine that the requirements are met, we will issue a permit under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA to UIC in accordance with the applicable regulatory requirements. We will not make our final decision until after the end of the 30-day comment period and will fully consider all comments received during the comment period.

Public Availability of Comments

All comments we receive become part of the public record associated with this action. If you submit a comment at <https://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment, including any personal identifying information, will be posted on the website. If you submit a comment that includes personal identifying information, such as your address, phone number, or email address, 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. Moreover, 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 disclosure in their entirety.

Authority

We provide this notice under section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 17.22) and the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*).

Sean Marsan,

Acting Assistant Regional Director, Midwest Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 2026-01258 Filed 1-22-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4333-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Geological Survey

[Docket No. USGS-2025-0171; OMB Control Number 1028-0065; GX26LR000F60100]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for Review and Approval; Production Estimate

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of information collection; request for comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 and its implementing regulations, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS, we) proposes to renew an information collection without change.

DATES: Interested persons are invited to submit comments. To be considered, we must receive your comments on or before March 24, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- *Internet:* <https://www.regulations.gov>. Search for and submit comments on Docket No. USGS-2025-0171.

- *U.S. Mail:* USGS, Information Collections Clearance Officer, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS 159, Reston, VA 20192.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Shonta E. Osborne by email at sosborne@usgs.gov, or by telephone at

703-648-7960. 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 may also view the Information Collection Request (ICR) at <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the PRA, as part of our continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burdens, we provide the general public and other Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on new, proposed, revised, and continuing collections of information. This helps us assess the impact of our information collection requirements and minimize the public's reporting burden. It also helps the public understand our information collection requirements and provides the requested data in the desired format.

We are soliciting comments on the proposed ICR described below. We are especially interested in public comments addressing the following:

- (1) if the collection necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the USGS minerals information mission, including whether the information will have practical utility;
- (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner;
- (3) is the estimate of burden accurate;
- (4) how the USGS might enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
- (5) how the USGS might minimize the burden of this collection on the respondents, including through the use of information technology.

Comments that you submit in response to this notice are a matter of public record. We will include or summarize each comment in our request to OMB to approve this ICR. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifiable information (PII) in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your PII—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your PII from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Abstract: This collection is needed to provide data on mineral production for annual commodity reports for use by government agencies, congressional offices, educational institutions, research organizations, financial

institutions, consulting firms, industry, academia, and the general public. These data and derived information will be published in the "Mineral Commodity Summaries," the publication that furnishes estimates covering the previous year's nonfuel mineral industry.

Title of Collection: Production Estimate.

OMB Control Number: 1028-0065.

Form Numbers: USGS Forms 9-4042-A and 9-4124-A.

Type of Review: Renewal with extension of a currently approved information collection.

Respondents/Affected Public: Businesses or other for-profit institutions; U.S. nonfuel minerals consumers.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Respondents: 848.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 848.

Estimated Completion Time per Response: 15 minutes.

Total Estimated Number of Annual Burden Hours: 212.

Respondent's Obligation: Voluntary.

Frequency of Collection: Annually.

Total Estimated Annual Non-hour Burden Cost: There are no "non-hour cost" burdens associated with this ICR.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, nor is a person required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

The authorities for this action are the PRA, the National Materials and Minerals Policy, Research and Development Act of 1980 (30 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*), the National Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 21a), and the Strategic and Critical Materials Stock Piling Act (50 U.S.C. 98 *et seq.*).

Braden Harker,

Director, National Minerals Information Center, U.S. Geological Survey.

[FR Doc. 2026-01224 Filed 1-22-26; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4338-11-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Indian Affairs

[OMB Control Number 1076-0161; 267A2100DD/AAPK300000/AOA501010.000000]

Agency Information Collection Activities; Submission to the Office of Management and Budget for Review and Approval; Tribal Transportation Program

AGENCY: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Interior.