



# BLM NEWS RELEASE

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## **President Proposes \$1.3 Billion Budget for BLM in Fiscal Year 2017**

*Request addresses critical priorities including sage-steppe restoration, modernizing the energy program, and investing in our National Conservation Lands*

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama today requested a Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 budget for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that further strengthens the Administration's commitment to restoring and conserving the Nation's sage-steppe ecosystem, supports the safe and effective management of the agency's oil and gas program, makes historic investments in the BLM's National Conservation Lands, and takes a proactive approach to better manage the unsustainable proliferation of wild horses and burros on Western public lands.

"The President's budget gives the BLM the resources we need to manage the public lands on a landscape scale," said BLM Director Neil Kornze. "This funding will help us continue to devise 21<sup>st</sup> century solutions to the challenges we face."

The FY 2017 budget requests \$1.3 billion for BLM operations and activities, more than \$7 million above the BLM's FY 2016 enacted budget, and positions the agency for success by restoring the health of the West's 65 million acres of sage-steppe ecosystem and ensuring responsible development of energy resources on the public lands. It also invests in the agency's National Conservation Lands — including many of the Nation's most precious and wildest areas — and seeks new tools to address a rapidly growing and unsustainable wild horse and burro population.

Charged by Congress with a dual mandate of managing public lands for multiple use and sustained yield, the BLM carries out its mission of maintaining the health, diversity, and productivity of these lands in a fast-changing nation. The agency manages 245 million surface acres of public lands — the most of any Federal agency — primarily in 12 Western States, including Alaska, and 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate nationwide. This equates to 13 percent of the Nation's surface and roughly one-third of its subsurface mineral resources.

The FY 2017 budget proposes \$1.2 billion for BLM operations, which is \$2.1 million above the 2016 enacted level. The request includes \$107 million for the Oregon and California Grant Lands appropriation and \$1.1 billion for the Management of Lands and Resources appropriation. The change in total program resources relative to 2016 reflects the budget's proposed offsetting user fees in the Rangeland Management and Oil and Gas Management programs, which together offset the total request by \$64.5 million allowing support for additional priorities.

The FY 2017 budget includes the President's continued focus on the following priorities:

**Land and Water Conservation Fund:** The Department of the Interior will submit a legislative proposal to authorize permanent annual funding, without further appropriation or fiscal year

limitation, for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the innovative, highly successful program that reinvests royalties from offshore oil and gas activities into public lands across the Nation. In 2017, the proposal includes \$43.9 million in discretionary funding and \$44.8 million in mandatory funding for the BLM's land acquisition program.

**Restoring the Sage-Steppe Ecosystem:** In 2015, the BLM's update of almost 70 land use plans in 10 Western States was integral to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) decision in September 2015 to keep the Greater sage grouse off the Endangered Species Act list at this time. An unprecedented undertaking, the Greater sage-grouse conservation effort has significantly reduced threats to the rangeland bird across 90 percent of its breeding habitat, resulting from sustained collaboration among private stakeholders and local, State, and Federal partners. Moreover, the FWS determination and the conservation mechanisms in place provide the regulatory certainty needed for sustainable economic development across millions of acres of Federal and private lands throughout the western United States. Success in sage-grouse conservation will demonstrate the value of planning for conservation and development at a landscape level through collaborative partnerships. The President has requested an additional \$14.2 million in FY 2017 for sage-grouse conservation, bringing to \$74.2 million the BLM's total investment in protecting and restoring the sage grouse habitat, in addition to a complementary increase of \$5 million for the BLM's National Seed Strategy to appropriately restore priority sage steppe habitat. This strategy, which aims to ensure the right seeds are available in the right places at the right time, also guides efforts to make treated lands more resilient to fires, invasive species, and drought.

**Support for BLM's National Conservation Lands:** The President's FY 2017 budget request includes a \$13.7 million program increase for BLM's National Conservation Lands, which contain some of the West's most spectacular landscapes and receive about one-third of all visitors to BLM lands. The increase will bring funding for the program to a historic \$50.6 million level, and helps solidify the importance of National Conservation Lands protection as the program embarks beyond its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This investment will address high-priority on-the-ground needs in national monuments and national conservation areas, including developing management plans for recently designated units, and developing and implementing travel management plans for high-use areas.

**Promoting Responsible Energy Development and Modernizing Regulations:** The President's FY 2017 budget request will enable the agency to continue strong support for the Administration's energy goals. Many of the BLM's oil and gas regulations date to the 1980s, soon after the BLM assumed responsibility for onshore leasing. The budget request includes a net increase of \$19.9 million in program increases for several priorities, including:

- Instituting new rules that establish procedures for how producers measure and account for oil and gas extracted from the public lands, which will ensure accurate royalties are paid;
- Implementing stronger regulations to reduce the wasteful release of natural gas from oil and gas operations on public and American Indian lands, reducing harmful methane emissions and providing a fair return on public resources;
- Implementing the hydraulic fracturing rule;
- Modernizing the Automated Fluid Minerals Support System to increase efficiencies in the management of oil and gas operations;
- Funding special pay for certain oil and gas program positions to improve recruitment and retention of these vital resources.

- Addressing legacy wells on the Alaska North Slope.

**Collaboratively Managing Wild Horses and Burros:** With more than 100,000 horses in BLM's care both on and off the range, the agency is redoubling its efforts to reduce the number of horses in holding facilities. The FY 2017 budget request supports new, innovative efforts to secure safe and cost-effective placement for unadopted animals, including proposed legislation to better facilitate the transfer of animals to other public entities at the local, state, and Federal levels. This proposal will work in tandem with other proactive efforts beginning in 2016 to better manage the nation's large and growing population of wild horses and burros. Each animal placed into private care can save taxpayers almost \$50,000.

The President's FY2017 budget request of \$13.4 billion for the Department of the Interior reflects his commitment to conserve vital national landscapes across the Nation, promote the responsible development of energy and mineral resources on public lands and meet Federal trust responsibilities to Native Americans. The Interior Budget in Brief is online: [www.doi.gov/budget](http://www.doi.gov/budget) and [www.doi.gov/budget/2017/Hilites/toc.html](http://www.doi.gov/budget/2017/Hilites/toc.html).

The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve more than 245 million acres of public land for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield.