



# BLM NEWS RELEASE

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Bureau of Land Management  
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## **Land Management Rule Will Facilitate Renewable Energy Development on Public Lands**

In support of the Administration's strategy to develop environmentally responsible renewable energy on public lands, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is issuing a regulation that will facilitate right-of-way applications for lands with wind and solar energy development potential.

The Final Rule to be published in tomorrow's *Federal Register* will allow the BLM, when necessary for the orderly administration of the public lands, to temporarily segregate lands in a wind or solar energy right-of-way application from the location of mining claims or other land appropriations.

Under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the BLM is charged with managing the public lands for multiple uses. Under existing regulations, lands proposed for exchange or sale can be closed to the filing of mining claims. However, lands included in a proposed right-of-way remain open to the location and entry of mining claims while the BLM is considering the application.

The Final Rule will revise the regulations to provide for the segregation of lands to facilitate the processing of solar and wind energy right-of-way applications.

The regulation has been in development for two years. On April 26, 2011, the BLM published an interim temporary Final Rule and a proposed rule on segregating lands in solar and wind energy applications. The Final Rule published tomorrow replaces the interim temporary Final Rule.

Since 2009, the BLM has approved 23 solar and 8 wind energy development right-of-way applications. In two proposed rights-of-way, mining claims were located after the right-of-way applications were submitted but before the rights-of-way could be authorized. In the two years before the interim temporary Final Rule went into effect, 437 new mining claims were located within wind energy right-of-way application areas in Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming; another 216 new mining claims were located within solar energy right-of-way application areas.

The temporary rules published in April 2011 have helped resolve such conflicts, since they granted the BLM authority to temporarily remove lands included in a renewable energy right-of-way application and lands offered for wind or solar energy lease from land appropriations like mining claims. By temporarily segregating lands covered by pending wind or solar right-of-way applications, or lands identified as potential renewable energy leasing areas, the BLM can help ensure that new resource conflicts will not arise with respect to mining claims.

Under the Final Rule, lands with right-of-way applications for solar or wind energy development could be segregated from the location and entry of mining claims. Such segregations would only be authorized as needed and would not necessarily cover all lands where renewable energy right-of-way applications have been filed.

A segregation would be effective for two years and could be extended for an additional two years if the appropriate BLM State Director determines that an extension is necessary for the orderly administration of the public lands.

The rule also provides for termination of a segregation by one of three means: (1) by having the BLM issue a decision issuing or not issuing a right-of-way for the wind or solar energy proposal; (2) by publishing a *Federal Register* notice of termination of the segregation; or (3) without further administrative action at the end of the segregation period.

The text of the Final Rule is available online [here](#).

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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