



# BLM NEWS RELEASE

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## **BLM Issues Guidance on Carbon Sequestration Studies**

The BLM recently issued guidance on processing land use proposals and permit applications for exploration and site characterization studies for potential subsurface carbon sequestration projects on BLM lands.

An Instruction Memorandum (IM) issued to BLM's State and Field offices describes permit and environmental review requirements related to processing carbon sequestration exploration and site characterization proposals. The IM can be found at the following address:  
[http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations/Instruction\\_Memos\\_and\\_Bulletins/national\\_instruction/2012/IM\\_2012-035.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations/Instruction_Memos_and_Bulletins/national_instruction/2012/IM_2012-035.html)

This interim policy is focused solely on carbon sequestration exploration and site characterization studies, and does not apply to the long-term authorization of carbon sequestration development projects.

Geological storage of carbon dioxide in subsurface rocks involves injection of carbon dioxide underground into the pore space of permeable rock units, such as oil and gas fields, deep saline water-bearing formations or coal beds. Operating and depleted oil and gas fields are considered potentially suitable sequestration sites, but most of the probable storage capacity for carbon dioxide in the United States is in deep saline formations.

“Capturing carbon emissions in secure geologic formations on public lands would prevent their release into the atmosphere, reducing the carbon intensity of our economy,” said BLM Director Bob Abbey. “This would in turn help realize the President’s goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050.”

In June 2009 the Secretary of the Interior recommended Congress establish a national program to reduce greenhouse gases by selecting appropriate underground geological formations on public lands to inject and store carbon dioxide.

In February 2010, President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum establishing an interagency task force tasked with proposing a plan to overcome barriers to the widespread, cost-effective deployment of carbon capture and storage within 10 years. The President also established a goal of bringing 5-10 commercial demonstration projects online by 2016.

Section 714 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 required the Secretary of the Interior to submit to Congress a report on a recommended framework for managing carbon sequestration activities on public land.

The report was delivered to Congress in June 2009, and included recommended criteria for identifying candidate sites, a proposed regulatory framework for leasing sequestration sites, and a discussion of public participation, environmental protection, liability, split estate, and land use authorization issues.

The Department of Energy has estimated that about 5.5 percent of the nation's carbon sequestration capacity exists on public lands.

The guidance is effective immediately.

The BLM manages more land - over 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health 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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