

## **FMG-RMPA-EIS VPM Meeting 4 - 2020-05-16**

THERESA ANCELL: Good morning, everyone. I would like to welcome you to the virtual public meeting for the Farmington Mancos-Gallup Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement virtual public meeting. My name is Theresa Ancell, and I work for a local Four Corners environmental consulting firm. I'm from the Four Corners area, and I've worked in the San Juan basin for the past 17 years.

We appreciate you all being here today. While we're waiting for all of our attendees to join us, I'm going to go over just some logistical information about joining online and over the phone. You can join online using the Zoom app from your computer, phone, or tablet. You'll use the log in information that was provided to you during registration.

We also have a phone-in option should your computer, tablet, or phone not have capabilities to run the online Zoom application. The phone number for that phone-in is 1 3 4 6 2 4 8 7 7 9 9. And you'll enter the webinar ID, and that number is 9 2 9 7 6 9 2 1 3 4 0. We'll be repeating that again over the next few minutes so that those of you that are joining will have a moment to write that down again. OK?

If you registered online, you should have received a confirmation email provided to you with a phone-in option as well. If you registered using our operator phone number, you will only have the option to join by phone. To have the best chance at seeing and hearing the presentation, please download the Zoom app directly to your computer and not use your internet browser.

If you haven't updated your Zoom to version 5 or greater, I suggest you to do that now since it'll be just a few more minutes before we get the presentation started. Thank you, everyone. It'll be just a few moments, and then I'll repeat that information again so that those that are just joining can hear it.

Good morning, everyone. Thanks again for joining. I'm going to review some information just so that those who've just joined can have an opportunity to hear it. I want to introduce myself. My name is Teresa Ancell. I work for a local Four Corners consulting firm. We will give you just a moment to call in or to log in. And during that time, we highly recommend you downloading the Zoom app to your computer instead of using the web browser.

Also, if you have called in, you won't be able to see the webinar. However, you should be able to hear. To have the best chance at seeing and hearing, please download the Zoom app directly on your computer, like I said, and make sure it's at version 5 or greater. We'll have a few more minutes before we start, so if you'd like to do that, please take the time now.

If you've logged on and you're having any issues, you can join the meeting on the telephone by calling the following number and using the following ID. That number is 1 3 4 6 2 4 8 7 7 9 9. Again, the phone number is 1 3 4 6 2 4 8 7 7 9 9. And the webinar ID password that you'll enter on the phone is 9 2 9 7 6 9 2 1 3 4 0. Again, that password is 9 2 9 7 6 9 2 1 3 4 0.

We're going to have just a few more minutes to let all of our participants have the opportunity to join. And then we will go ahead with the presentation.

Good morning, everyone. We'd like to go ahead and start our presentation now. Thank you again for joining. I will be your moderator later on in the meeting when we open to public comments. Right now I would like to introduce Jill Aragon. She's with the BLM, and she will get us kicked off for our morning presentation. Thank you, Jill.

JILL ARAGON: Hello everyone. My name is Jillian Aragon, and I'm a public affairs specialist for the Bureau of Land Management Farmington District Office. We welcome and thank you for participating in the Farmington Mancos-Gallup Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement virtual public meeting. For this presentation, we will refer to this project as the RMPA, Bureau of Land Management, BLM, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, BIA.

Appreciate you joining us virtually as we navigate through these difficult times. Before we begin the presentation, we would like to take this opportunity to go over some housekeeping items to ensure that you are able to access the information we are providing today. Our audience today is joining us through a variety of different means. Some are listening and viewing this online, others joining by telephone, and some may be viewing this presentation after the live session has ended.

During this presentation, all participants' audio will be muted with video streaming turned off. Once the presentation is complete, we will begin the comment portion of this session. Additional instructions will be given at that point. We want to inform you that this presentation is being recorded and will be made available on the project's e-planning website.

Closed captioning is available for the presentation by clicking the CC button on the right hand corner of your Zoom screen. Transcripts of these comments will be made available in the final RMPA/EIS. If you are having some technical issues with your Zoom interface, you can let us know through the chat box by submitting a question in the QA feature.

You can do so by clicking the QA icon at the bottom of your Zoom window. We'll be able to assist you. We asked a more complex questions regarding the RMPA/EIS be submitted as formal comments. If it would be easier to join by phone, please use this phone number-- 3 4 6 2 4 8 7 7 9 9 with a webinar ID 9 2 9 7 6 9 2 1 3 4 0.

Additionally, this webinar presentation is being streamed on BLM New Mexico's Facebook page. Those viewing this from Facebook Live need to know that any comments submitted via Facebook Live are not considered official comments on the draft RMPA. At the end of this presentation, we will be providing information on how you can submit comments outside of this meeting. Now we will hear from the BLM New Mexico State Director Tim Spisak and the BIA Navajo Regional Director Bart Stevens.

TIM SPISAK: Good morning, and thank you for joining us today. My name is Tim Spisak, and I'm the state director for the Bureau of Land Management New Mexico. With me is Bart

Stevens, the director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Regional Office. The BIA has teamed up with BLM as a co-lead for this process. Now the BLM and BIA welcome you to the Farmington Mancos-Gallup Resource Management Plan Amendment virtual public meeting.

We understand these conversations are often preferred to be done in person, but right now it is critical that we keep our part to the American public, and BLM and CIA employees healthy and safe. It is also important, though, that we maintain a capable and functioning government to the greatest extent possible during the COVID-19 outbreak. To achieve this, BLM and BIA are using current technology where possible to move forward with important projects like this Farmington RMPA.

Thanks to all of us, all of you who have joined us for this meeting online or by phone today. We appreciate your interest and input. I will now turn it over to director Stevens, who has also prepared some remarks for this presentation.

**BART STEVENS:** Thank you Mr. Spisak speak to that. Good morning. This is Bart Stevens. I am the director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs at the Navajo regional office based in Gallup. I want to also welcome you all and thank you for joining us today for these meetings that are very important to all of us. We've all had to adapt and cope with this pandemic. Our commitment to ensuring the health and safety of the public is paramount.

And we are also dedicated to fulfilling Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and our government to government consultation responsibilities. We will continue to be available to consult with tribes throughout the EIS process. We look forward to our continued work together on this important project and guiding through the process.

Also, during this time there are many out there that have been giving selflessly to get the rest of the community and the world at large the things that we need to move forward through this pandemic. We know that social distancing is also prominent in preventing the spread of the COVID virus. And for that we want to thank everybody that's going the extra mile and doing those services for us, including our heroic medical professionals.

It's because of this that I believe in moments of crisis, we look out for one another to guide us through one of the darkest times and heal us through the long recovery that is yet to come. These individuals are risking their lives and fighting on the front lines to protect us all and provide us the necessary equipment and essential needs of the community. And for this we want to say thank you.

So at this time, I would like for you all to join me in a moment of silence to not only acknowledge but to honor these individuals and other community members that are experiencing the same hardships during these difficult times. So what we're going to do is we're going to switch off the audio for a moment of silence. And thank you.

**JILL ARAGON:** Thank you again for participating. We will now review the agenda for the meeting. We will begin with a presentation, and then we will accept comments from the public.

The presentation will cover the EIS team, the purpose of the meeting, the NEPA process, and the project overview. We expect the presentation to last approximately 25 minutes.

I'm going to go over some meeting logistics at this time. I'll give you a few seconds to grab a pen if you need to write this information down. As a reminder, this meeting is currently being recorded and will be available after the meeting has concluded. A Navajo recording of a newsletter describing the project and this process is available and can be found on the project's e-planning website.

If you're on the computer, feel free to ask questions in the Zoom Q&A feature during the presentation, where BLM and BIA specialists will be working to answer you. Due to time limitations, these questions will not be read during the meeting. And we are asking participants to submit more complex questions as formal comments on the RMPA/EIS. Please be courteous to other attendees by not spamming or using profanity and the Q&A chat box.

The public comment portion of this meeting will begin after the presentation. At the close of the presentation, individuals that have signed up during registration can submit their comments. Once everyone who has registered has been given the opportunity to provide a comment, the line will be open to anyone else wishing to provide comments. We do have translators available, so feel free to make your verbal comments in Navajo.

There will be one more meeting after today. You may register for this meeting either online or by calling 5056359701. We will repeat this information at the end of the presentation. We are here today to help orient you in reviewing the document and provide you an opportunity to submit your verbal comments. So BLM and BIA have placed additional meeting materials on the project's e-planning website for your review.

Beyond these meetings, comments will also be accepted through e-planning or by mailing them to the BLM Farmington field office or to the BIA Navajo regional office. Now onto the presentation that will be facilitated by the BLM Farmington district manager, Al Elser.

AL ELSER: Good morning. Thank you, and hello to all of our participants. My name's Al Elser, and I'm the BLM Farmington district manager. Your participation in this process is valued, and I appreciate you taking the time out of your days to join us as we look for innovative ways to continue our mission while ensuring that our community remains safe.

The BLM is preparing the draft EIS due to changing oil and gas development patterns in the Mancos shale and Gallop sandstone, collectively known as the Mancos-Gallup formations, including innovations in horizontal drilling technology and multi-stage hydraulic fracturing. The BLM will use this EIS to consider amending decisions in the 2003 RMP related to impacts of oil and gas development, as well as rights of way, lands with wilderness characteristics, and vegetation.

It's important to remember that the BLM's 2003 RMP is still valid and that this amendment could provide the agency with additional management tools within the decision space defined for the draft RMPA/EIS. The BIA does not currently have an RMP for these lands, so they will be using

the EIS to evaluate alternatives and resource impacts related to its authority over mineral leasing and associated activity decisions within the planning area.

The BLM and BIA are preparing the draft EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, or NEPA, which requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of proposed federal actions prior to making decisions. While preparing this document under NEPA, the BLM and BIA were required to comply with all applicable federal regulations. Examples include the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Clean Water Act.

Our project managers for this project are Sarah Scott from the BLM and Robert Begay from the BIA. We also have a team of resource specialists from both agencies, collectively known as the interdisciplinary team. This team assisted in the development of the draft environmental impact statement and are joining us today to help provide clarifications to the draft EIS. They will be doing so through the Zoom Q&A function noted previously.

The draft EIS was developed based on input from agency staff, cooperating agencies, and the comments we received during our public scoping process. There are 23 cooperating agencies in total, including federal, state, and local governments, tribes and pueblos, and Navajo Nation chapter houses. This slide provides an overview of the NEPA process.

The first step of the EIS process is to publish a notice of intent in the Federal Register. For this EIS, the BLM initially published a notice of intent in 2014. After the publication of the notice of intent, BLM conducted public and internal scoping to identify issues, provide resource and other information, and develop planning criteria to guide the preparation of the draft EIS document. In 2016, after the BIA joined us co-lead, another notice of intent was published in the Federal Register, followed by an additional round of public scoping.

After the completion of that scoping, the agencies began preparing the draft EIS. Scoping input from the public and ongoing work with cooperating agencies, resource specialists, and other stakeholders helped the BLM and BIA to develop a range of alternatives and establish a framework for our analysis. The notice of availability for the draft EIS was published in the Federal Register on February 28. This began the 90 day public review and comment period and is the step we are currently on for the NEPA process.

The agencies will be accepting comments on this document through May 28. After the 90 day public review period, the BLM and BIA will review the comments that were submitted and begin to incorporate them into the final EIS document as appropriate. Once the final EIS development is complete, we will publish a notice of availability announcing the final EIS, which will begin the 30 day public protest period.

The draft EIS can be found online at [www.blm.gov/nm/farmington](http://www.blm.gov/nm/farmington). Hard copies have been distributed throughout northwest New Mexico. Please contact us and we will direct you to the nearest location. There are four volumes to the draft EIS. Volume 1 contains the draft itself. It introduces the project and explains the purpose and need. It also describes the alternatives, the affected environment, and the consequences of each alternative.

The executive summary in this document will give you a brief overview of the purpose of the project and what to expect to find within the document. Tables 2-2 and 2-3 offer a look at a specific range of alternatives for which resource management updates are being considered. Volume 2 includes a series of appendices with a variety of supporting information, including maps and figures. And volumes 3 and 4 are supplemental reports that describe in more detail the affected environment and the environmental consequences of each alternative.

The map you are seeing now is of the state of New Mexico. Highlighted on this map in the northwest corner of the state are the lands referred to as the planning area. As we zoom into that portion of the state, we are showing the planning area that is being covered by the BLM's analysis. The boundaries of the planning area expand from the Colorado, New Mexico boundary to the north, down the south near the Vicente and Pueblo Contado chapter houses, and from the area known as the Hog back to the west, reaching to the eastern edge of the Hickory, Apache Nation border.

The planning area includes San Juan, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, and McKinley counties, covering almost 4.2 million acres, with the BLM and BIA responsible for managing approximately half of those acres. However, the decision area, or those lands affected by this RMPA, is much more focused and does not include all lands within the planning area. The map is now showing the BLM's decision area for this RMPA/EIS effort.

Only the areas in yellow on this map are subject to the updated management prescriptions being considered in the document. Existing leases will continue to operate under their current terms and are subject to the decisions outlined in the BLM's 2003 RMP. Once the final decision on this document is made, any new lease issued would be subject to the land use allocations and management decisions of the RMPA/EIS.

Next we'll show BIA's decision area. Similar to the BLM, only the areas shown in brown on this map are subject to the considerations in the document. We will now merge the two maps to show you the decision area for both agencies. As you can see, the agencies are working together to manage a complex, overlapping landscape. The alternatives that the BLM and BIA developed offer a range of possible management approaches for the decision area.

We have each identified five alternatives, including eight BLM sub alternatives, that would apply specifically to fluid mineral leasing management around the boundary of Chaco Culture National Historic Park. The draft EIS-- excuse me-- presents the varying degrees to which resources could be impacted under each alternative. This will be dependent on the theme of the alternative, nature of the resource, location of the resource, and the proposed action and other factors.

While each agency developed its own range of alternatives, the general themes from each were similar across agencies. The no action alternative consists of continuing current management outlined in the 2003 RMP. Alternative A emphasizes natural ecosystems. Alternative B places an emphasis on Chacoan and cultural landscapes. Alternative C emphasizes land health and traditional and cultural life ways.

And alternative D places an emphasis on maximizing resource production while minimizing impacts to the surrounding areas. The BLM and BIA are responsible for signing their own decision for this project, and both agencies are recommending alternative C as the preferred alternative. The goal behind the agencies identifying a preferred alternative at this stage is to get the public to provide more focused comments.

It is important to understand that even though the agencies have both indicated a preferred alternative, they are not obligated nor required to select alternative C for their final decisions. They may select another alternative, or the final decision may include components of each alternative, provided the impacts of the management tools are consistent. In accordance with NEPA, the next step in this process will be to review the comments we received during this public review period and prepare the final EIS.

A notice of availability will be published when the EIS is ready for public review. This will begin the 30 day public protest period for the plan. Upon completion of the protest resolutions, the agencies will prepare and sign the records of decision for the approved RMPA. The BLM and BIA will each find their own records of decision for this process. Once signed, the updated management tools would become available for use by the agencies.

Our goal is to sign these records of decision in early 2021. This wraps up the presentation phase of this meeting, and we will now be shifting into the public comment portion. I'm going to transition back to Jill so she can provide you with further instructions. Thank you.

JILL ARAGON: As AI stated, we will now begin the public comment portion of this session. If you have not had the opportunity to review the draft EIS, you can find the document on the BLM's e-planning website, where you can also provide comments. The comments you provide on the draft EIS can assist the agencies in ensuring that we have completed a thorough analysis so that we are prepared to make an informed decision.

Substantive, specific comments are the most useful for this process. These comments could include new information about the proposed action, alternatives, or analysis-- identify factual corrections or flaws in the analysis-- or provide information on different sources of research that could better inform the analysis. Examples of comments that are not substantive and may not help us change the draft EIS would include the following.

Those in favor or against the proposed action or alternatives without providing any rationale. Agreeing or disagreeing with agency policy or decisions without justification or supporting data. Not being relevant to the decision area or proposed management decisions. Or vague or open ended questions. Here are some examples of comments.

A poor comment might include-- this document is terrible, and I'm against it. A better comment would be-- this document is terrible in that you do not adequately address x impacts this may have on x resources. The best type of comment we can receive is-- this document is terrible in that you do not adequately address x impacts that this may have on x resources. I'm attaching some results of studies that were conducted for your review.

A comment moderator will be assisting in this next session as we announce speakers and ensure that your phone lines are unmuted for commenting. We will be taking comments in the order that requests were received during registration. Online registrants first and then phone registrants. When it is your turn to comment, the moderator will announce you by the name you registered under.

If you are on the web application, when you hear your name, please use the Raise Hand feature so the moderator knows you are available and ready to offer your comment. For commenters that are joining by phone, the moderator will identify you by the last four digits of your phone number. When you hear your phone number, press \* 9 and the moderator will unmute your line and you can begin speaking.

Once all registered comments have been given, and if time allows, we will open the floor to anyone wishing to provide additional comments. We will offer this to callers on the phone first, and then offer to those joining by Zoom. If a person is cut off or does not get an opportunity to comment, they are welcome to submit their comments via the means listed on this screen. This information will be given again at the end of this meeting.

To ensure that we are able to receive as many comments as possible, we are limiting each commenter to three minutes. After three minutes are complete, the commenter's microphone will be muted, and we'll move to the next person. If anyone is speaking in their official capacity as a government official, please let us know for our records.

We want to remind commenters that they are being recorded and to please be courteous to the audience by not using profanity while providing your comments. We asked that once it is your turn to speak and your line is open to please state both your first and last name and spell them for us. We would also like to remind commenters that the BLM and BIA are here to take your comments.

However, we will not be responding to these comments at this time. Responses to all comments will be included in a comment report that will be published with the final EIS. As a reminder, we do have over 50 resource specialists available to respond to questions submitted through the Q&A chat box. Theresa will now kick us off with our first commenter.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Jill. OK. I'm going to go ahead and call off the next three speakers so that you all know where you are in the queue. And we'll get our timer set up. So as Jill said, you'll have three minutes to provide your comment. Right now we have 11 folks signed up for commenting, and we will go through them in the order that they were received.

At that point, we will open the lines-- once we've gotten through everyone, we'll open the lines to those on the phone that would like to provide a comment. So we're going to start by announcing the first three. So we have Jeremy Nichols, Rebecca Sobel, and Jolene Catron.

So if you could all raise your hand. What that means is if you're on the phone, you hit \* 9. And if you're on the Zoom application, you go to the Participants tab, click on it, and there'll be a Raise



Hand icon. So once you have your hands raised, we can see that you're in the queue and we will call on you. Again, Jeremy Nichols is first, Rebecca Sobel, and Jolene Catron.

OK. I show Jeremy Nichols on the phone. Jeremy, we're going to-- you should have the ability to talk now. Jeremy, are you there?

JEREMY NICHOLS: Yes. Good morning, Theresa. Good morning, everybody.

THERESA ANCELL: Good morning, Jeremy.

JEREMY NICHOLS: Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I would offer that I would cede my number one speaking position to any elected official or tribal representative who is on right now. I don't know if I can do that, Theresa. Or if you can ask if there are any elected officials or tribal representatives who wish to comment.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Jeremy. If you are a tribal representative that wishes to comment ahead of Jeremy, please raise your hand. You'll have to state your tribal position and your official designation within the pueblo or tribe that you're representing. I show Marilyn Guida raising her hand.

Marilyn, are you-- can you state who you're with, please? Can you hear me?

MARILYN GUIDA: OK, here I am. Hi, this is Marilyn Guida. I am brand new to looking at this issue. And I just went to the e-planning website, and I can't really figure out what to do after I've located the number of the EIS, I guess it is-- the NEPA. Is it--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

THERESA ANCELL: Marilyn, can you state who you're with? Which tribe or pueblo that you're representing or government official.

MARILYN GUIDA: I'm not representing anybody but myself. I live in El Paso, Texas.

THERESA ANCELL: Well, we're opening it right now to folks that may be representing a government official. And I'm not seeing it on the line, but we'll come back to you, Marilyn.

JEREMY NICHOLS: I'll come back. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: OK, Jeremy, I do not see that we have anybody on the line that hasn't already signed up and that's willing to take your position. Did you want to go ahead and provide your comment?

AL ELSER: Yes. Thank you, Teresa. And thank you for asking the audience to see if there were any tribal reps or elected officials. Thank you for the opportunity to comment this morning. I just want to echo the sentiment that's been expressed so far at all these meetings, which is that they

are a travesty right now in terms of meaningfully engaging the impacted public. And in particular, the impacted tribal communities that are involved here.

We've heard from a lot of tribal representatives that they're struggling to respond to the COVID-19 health crises but the BLM is plowing ahead with this new Resource Management Plan Amendment that would drastically alter the way the greater Chaco region is managed and open the door for thousands of new oil and gas wells. The BLM has been asked by, I mean, pretty much everybody to pause this process and extend the public comment period.

And the agency has yet to respond, which is very discouraging and downright shameful at this moment in time, given that the COVID-19 crisis is very real. Given that people are distracted with protecting their health and the health of their communities. And given that there's no need to be barreling ahead with this process. It's unclear where the urgency around this process is coming from.

And given the fact that there is urgency around responding to the COVID-19 health crisis, and in respecting tribal requests to pause this process, it just seems like the sensible and reasonable thing to do to put the brakes on this for now. We're very concerned that this Resource Management Plan Amendment, it does not adequately address the overall impacts of Mancos-Gallup oil and gas development.

We're very concerned that it doesn't address the cumulative impacts, particularly cumulative impacts in neighboring field offices like the Rio Puerco field office, which is also experiencing a surge in oil and gas extraction tied to fracking of the Mancos shale. This environmental impact statement is deficient in so many ways. We'll obviously be providing some more detailed comments, but it's discouraging that the Bureau of Land Management has not taken an objective look at alternatives like no new oil and gas leasing and alternatives that actually discourage future oil and gas extraction within the Farmington field office.

We hope the Bureau of Land Management sees a light and takes a different approach to this Resource Management Plan Amendment. We also hope that the Bureau of Land Management starts to acknowledge and respect the tribal communities that are--

JILL ARAGON: 30 seconds.

JEREMY NICHOLS: --impacted here and that have spoken out to you during these past few hearings. I think it's so telling that, overwhelmingly, the Bureau of Land Management has faced nothing but criticism around how this public process has unfolded and around this Resource Management Plan Amendment. If the Bureau of Land Management is serious about serving the public and respecting tribal rights and respecting communities and health, then it will take a very different approach.

So we hope the agency does that. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you very much for your comment, Jeremy. Next on deck, we have Rebecca. Rebecca Sobel, Jolene Catron, and Jesse Deubel. OK. I see a couple of those. Rebecca, if you want to make a comment, can you please raise your hand? There we are. OK, Rebecca.

REBECCA SOBEL: Great. Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: I can hear you great, thank you. You can go ahead and state your name and spell it, please.

REBECCA SOBEL: Thank you. Good morning. My name is Rebecca Sobel. R-E-C-E-C-C-A S-O-B-E-L.

THERESA ANCELL: Perfect, Rebecca.

REBECCA SOBEL: OK? OK, great.

THERESA ANCELL: Yep. You can go ahead.

REBECCA SOBEL: I'd might echo the comments of my colleague, Jeremy Nichols, who spoke before me. I was also present at the 2016 and 2017 scoping meetings on this RMPA, where thousands of people attended more than 11 scoping meetings that were at impacted tribal communities and in Albuquerque with strong pueblo attendance. That these meetings are online with muted faces and censored comments and dead air more than meaningful comments shows you, and should show BLM, the farce that this process has become.

I don't think it's a stretch to assume that this-- for the public to rightfully assume that this process is nothing more than a sham and an effort to steamroll more drilling plans in greater Chaco, where the public has resoundingly asked for restraint and an end to drilling. There hasn't been a single comment that I've heard in any of the meetings that I've attended that has affirmed this process.

And I hope that shows BLM that it needs to go back to the drawing board. In an era where oil and gas is potentially revenue negative for the state of New Mexico and leaves a legacy of environmental disaster, there is no justifiable reason that would-- that would justify propagating this plan and more drilling on this landscape. And with the remaining minute, minute and 38 seconds of my time, I will leave you with a song that has been played multiple times over this session as a sentiment to how the public is feeling in response to this drilling plan. Give me one second.

[MUSIC - TWISTED SISTER, "WE'RE NOT GONNA TAKE IT"]

(SINGING) We're not gonna take it. No, we ain't gonna take it. We're not gonna take it anymore. We got the right to choose it, there ain't no way we'll lose it. This is our life, this is our song.

We'll fight the powers that be, just don't pick our destiny 'cause you don't know us-- you don't belong. We're not gonna take it. No, we ain't gonna take it. We're not gonna take it anymore.

Oh, you're so condescending, your gall is never ending. We don't want nothing, not a thing from you. You life is trite and jaded, boring and confiscated. If that's your best, your best won't do.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you for your comment, Rebecca. I'll now list off our next three commenters so that you'll have the ability to raise your hands. We have Jolene Catron. Jolene, I can see your hand. Jesse Deubel, Shaina Oliver, and I'll go ahead and one more. Jamie Minden.

So we'll start with Jolene. Jolene, you should be able to mute your microphone.

JOLENE CATRON: Yes. Good morning. Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: I can hear you wonderfully. Thank you, Jolene. You could state your name and spell for us, and then you can begin your comment.

JOLENE CATRON: Certainly. My name is Jolene Catron. And it's spelled J-O-L-E-N-E. Last name C-A-T-R-O-N. And I'll keep my comments short. I am an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. I am also a citizen of the United States and a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. I am highly concerned about the accessibility of this public document.

Being that our libraries are closed, I have no way to access the document other than my Android phone. And try reading four volumes on an Android phone to submit meaningful comments is just ridiculous. So I just wanted to make that statement. I don't know if there's other public places where I can access the document, but most places are closed right now because of the pandemic.

So I think that this public comment period that really should be extended. And I request-- I mean, excuse me. I respectfully request that this statement, that the statement period be extended so that everybody has access to the document in order to review it and to understand it and to provide meaningful comments to it. So that's the end of my comments. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you very much for your comment, Jolene. We really appreciate that. Next on board we have Jesse Deubel, Shaina Oliver, and Jamie Minden. Jesse, you should be able to unmute your microphone.

JESSE DEUBEL: Can you hear me? Can you hear me, Theresa?

THERESA ANCELL: Yes, sir. I can hear you. Wonderful.

JESSE DEUBEL: Thank you. My name is spelled correctly on the screen. J-E-S-S-E D-E-U-B-E-L. Thank you and all the presenters this morning for taking time on a Saturday to provide this presentation and accept this public comment. I am the executive director of the New Mexico Wildlife Federation.

The New Mexico Wildlife Federation is the state's oldest and largest sports men and women's organization, representing hunters and anglers across the state. And one quick point of clarification. The hunters in New Mexico, the public land hunters rely very, very heavily on

BLM lands. And one thing I think it's important for all participants in this meeting to recognize is that when we talk about BLM land, we're not talking about the land owned by the BLM.

We're talking about land that's owned by the American people. And the BLM is tasked with the management of those public lands. And so, like others have said, this process is not doing justice to the public landowners of New Mexico and of this country. Members of the Navajo Nation and the pueblos are among the hardest hit by the pandemic.

Many tribal leaders have closed down non-essential government operations. Virtual meetings do not constitute meaningful tribal consultation, and they fall short of the Trump administration's trust and treaty obligations to tribes, as members of the Navajo Nation and the pueblos have repeatedly expressed. Tribal leaders, the Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Energy and Minerals and Natural Resources, New Mexico's entire congressional delegation have all repeatedly called on this administration to extend the comment period to give people more time to weigh in and ensure that communities are able to meaningfully participate in the process.

The mayor of Aztec joined these calls recently and also requested a comment extension. The public deserves the opportunity to be heard about this destructive plan. But so far the Trump administration refuses to listen. Putting in place permanent protections for Chaco Cultural National Historical Park is the only way to ensure that future leasing and drilling does not destroy the irreplaceable historic and cultural resources found in and around Chaco Canyon.

Please extend this period. Thank you very much.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you very much for your comment, Jesse. We will now move on to the next-- I will list off the next three commenters. Shaina Oliver Jamie Minden, and Felina Romero. Again, to raise your hand if you're on the phone, you hit \* 9. And to raise your hand on the online application, hit the Participants button and then the Raise Hand icon.

Shaina Oliver? Not seeing her on the list. So if you're on the phone, Shaina, please hit \* 9. OK. Not seeing Shaina. We do have Jamie. Jamie Minden is up next.

JAIME MINDEN: Hi. Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: I can. Welcome, Jamie.

JAIME MINDEN: It's spelled J-A-M-I-E M-I-N-D-E-N. I'm here representing Silicon Valley Youth Climate Strikes. The Navajo Nation is already being hit incredibly hard by the coronavirus. And instead of providing aid, the Trump administration is choosing to kick these people while they're down and take 7% of the little land that they have left. It is my understanding that stealing someone else's land for personal gain is illegal.

And I guess that this country doesn't really care when laws are broken to hurt black and brown communities anymore. This is criminal to steal someone else's land for greed and personal gain, especially when this country's indigenous people have already suffered so much at the hands of

the government in the past. This is the 21st century. Why are you, the Bureau of Land Management, yet again allowing this to happen? Thank you for your time.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you very much for your comment, Jamie. I'll now list the next three that we have on deck. So Felina Romero, Fern Cereceres, Marilyn Guida. So, Felina. Felina, if you're available, you can raise your hand. There we are.

Looks like we have you, Felina. Felina, would you like to make a comment this morning?

FELINA ROMERO: Yeah. Sorry, I'm still trying to process and wake up. This is a lot of information to be cramming in and seeing-- um, is there a way you can come back to me in a second? I'm still waking up. I kind of need process time to wake up. Is that possible?

THERESA ANCELL: Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. We can come to you after our other participants have had an opportunity. Thank you, Felina. OK. Next on deck we have Fern, then Marilyn Guida, Aaron Sims, and our last speaker will-- well, we'll have Felina as our last speaker. And then we have Linda Sanchez.

So, Fern Cereceres. Sorry if I say your name wrong. Fern, can you hear me now?

FERN CERECERES: Yes. Can you hear us?

THERESA ANCELL: I can hear you. Thank you, sir. If you could please spell your name for our audience on the phone.

FERN CERECERES: F-E-R-N. Last name, C-E-R-E-C-E-R-E-S. And before I address the, let's say, BIA issue, I want to address the Trump name being thrown out. BIA has used just about any presidential opportunity. We've had so many different administrations. It's the government administration. It's not Trump. People need to really wake up.

But concerning this issue, I've not seen anything that shows fracking to have a non-environmental impact. In fact, there has been some serious issues associated with fracking. And I would be interested in knowing what BIA is using as a standard.

If it's the lobbyist standard where these companies have come in and just taken what they want and then go, BIA failed us on the Navajo Nation. When it came to the coal, they ended up robbing them of their proper payments. Being underbid, BIA didn't do anything about it. Won the case twice, got thrown out twice.

Never really a good explanation after it was proven that they did that on purpose. So I don't know what BIA is doing to prove that this is going to have no impact or minimal impact on anything. And then the other component is, if you're going to write this RFP out, you need to make it to the people and put a way in there that, through arbitration-- not even some legal mumbo jumbo-- just simple arbitration with the weighting on the side of any Navajo individual or the people in general that should be able to sue the BIA for any mismanagement.

They've already proven their ability to mismanage. They've very little proven their ability to manage. So I would like to see how and where the people and the government, the Navajo government, can go after the BIA as part of this process. Because they have consistently mismanaged anything that they touch.

The Navajo people, and many other people, have not benefited from BIA. As a matter of fact, it's been shown to be terrible at what it's supposed to be doing.

JILL ARAGON: 30 seconds.

FERN CERECERES: And people get hurt in the process. They need a process that's successful for getting retribution at the rate that BIA does their stuff. Other than that, people need to understand that it is a government process, not an individual president. They love to throw that name out there, but it's a bit of a joke. It's been on both sides of that fence. Bye.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you for your comment, Fern. We really appreciate it. OK. After Fern we have Marilyn Guida. Marilyn you can raise your hand if you're on the online application by hitting the Participants button. OK, Marilyn. We see your hand.

After Marilyn, we're going to have Aaron Sims, Melinda Arviso-Cioco, and Felina Romero. Marylin, can you hear me?

MARILYN GUIDA: Yes, I can hear you. How about you?

THERESA ANCELL: I can hear you perfectly.

MARILYN GUIDA: OK, thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: Please state your name and spell it for our audience. We appreciate it. Thank you.

MARILYN GUIDA: Yes. Marylin Guida. M-A-R-I-L-Y-N. Guida, G-U-I-D-A. And I am in favor of postponing the process until we get past the COVID, until all the Navajo people can access the comments. And also I like to point out that fracking causes underground earth movements, earthquakes. This has been found in Texas where I live-- and other parts of the United States.

So these earth movements can cause damage to Chaco's ancient structures and the rock, geologic formations where the ancient petroglyphs and pictograms can be damaged. So this is not only physical damage, but spiritual damage to the people of the indigenous cultures of the area. That's all. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: We thank you very much, Marilyn. Thank you for that comment. OK. Before we move on to Aaron, Melinda, and Felina, I'd like to announce that I did get confirmation that if you don't have access to the internet to download the documents, we would

like to extend the following options for you to contact BLM and BIA to request a hard copy. OK?

So if you need to, grab a pencil. I'm going to provide you that information so that you can call or email our project managers with that request. OK? So if you need a paper copy of the EIS, please call Sarah Scott. Sarah is with the BLM. Sarah Scott's number is 5 0 5 5 6 4 7 6 8 9. Again, Sarah Scott with BLM. Her phone numbers is 5 0 5 5 6 4 7 6 8 9.

Sarah's email address-- Sarah Scott-- is [sscott@blm.gov](mailto:sscott@blm.gov). Our other project manager is Mr. Robert Begay. Robert's phone number is 5 0 5 8 6 3 8 5 1 5. Again, Robert Begay with the BIA Navajo regional office at 5 0 5 8 6 3 8 5 1 5.

Robert's email address is his first name Robert, [robert.begay1@bia.gov](mailto:robert.begay1@bia.gov). Again, that is [robert.begay1@bia.gov](mailto:robert.begay1@bia.gov). OK? Thank you for that time. I apologize. OK. Aaron. Aaron, you are next up. If you would like, you should be able to go ahead and try your audio.

AARON SIMS: Good morning. Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: Good morning, Aaron. I can hear you.

AARON SIMS: OK. Aaron Sims. A-A-R-O-N S-I-M-S. Good morning, everyone. I serve as legal counsel for the pueblo of Acoma. I've been authorized by Governor Brian Vallo to deliver these comments. Governor Vallo is unable to attend these virtual meetings because he's focused on overseeing the urgent health and safety needs of the Pueblo.

Acoma has significant interest in the RMPA and has invested significant time, resources, and personnel, and is a cooperating agency under the EIS process. Acoma is frankly appalled that the BLM and BIA have plunged forward without considering Acoma and other tribes' ability to meaningfully participate in this process, despite pueblo and other tribal cultural resources being a subject of this planning document.

Governor Vallo, along with the All Pueblo Counsel of Governors, and other pueblos have submitted urgent requests for an extension directly to the secretary of the interior, the BLM state director, who is on the phone today, and to BLM district and BIA regional leadership, also on the phone today. But Acoma is shocked that no one has responded and no effort has been made by leadership to contact Acoma regarding its concerns.

Due to the pandemic, the measures Acoma has had to take are extraordinary. Acoma has closed the reservation to all nonresidents, with checkpoints being manned 24/7 and stay at home orders to Acoma residents. Therefore, Acoma has closed all non-essential government departments, which includes its THPO office, and redirected significant resources to actively feed, rehouse, and provide medical care for Acoma residents.

Normally, as a participant in the RMPA process, Acoma takes significant measures to review documents, internally convene discussions, and develop information to share with the agencies. Acoma routinely sends its governor, or other tribal officials, it's THPO and THPO advisory



members, along with Acoma's attorneys or other persons to RMPA meetings. This is how serious Acoma treats this process.

For this reason, the BLM and the BIA should recognize how Acoma is absolutely in no position to focus its attention on the RMPA. We're not attempting to be obstructive, but we are faced with the reality of an ongoing emergency. I'd like to remind you that upon issuance of the draft RMPA, Acoma and other stakeholders were engaged in a three-day Section 106 meetings, which objectives were left incomplete with a mutual agreement to reconvene and complete just weeks later.

In the two weeks thereafter, the COVID emergency prompted the BLM and the BIA, at the urging of consulting tribes, to postpone the March 18 and following April Section 106 meetings. That was the right choice. However, the emergency continues to this day, coinciding almost entirely with the 90 day public commenting period. Therefore, Acoma reiterates its request for an extension of the May 28 deadline and opposes these virtual meetings as a meaningful method of public and tribal participation.

I see that I'm out of time, so I'll finish the rest of my comments, Theresa, when I come back. When you reopen the mic, if that's all right.

THERESA ANCELL: I appreciate that, Aaron. Yes. We have two more speakers, and then you can come back on. And you can have the floor, OK?

AARON SIMS: Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: If that's OK. OK. Thanks, Aaron. We appreciate that. Thanks for doing that. Melinda Arviso-Cioco? Melinda, are you on? If you're on the phone, Melinda-- I think you're registered on the phone-- you do hit \* 9, and that will raise your hand. And then we can unmute you. OK. I'm not seeing Melinda. Melinda Arviso.

OK. We will move on. Felina? Felina Romero, if you're on and you are available to speak now, we can take your comment. If you still would like a little bit more time, Mr. Sims would like to continue his. So you can raise your hand, Felina, by \* 9 or the Participants code with the Raised Hand function.

I see Felina has raised her hand, so we will open the mic to her. Felina, can you hear me?

[SILENCE]

OK. We may be experiencing some technical difficulties here.

MODERATOR: Yeah. Felina, if you're talking right now, you haven't unmuted yourself. So you might need to unmute yourself. Hit the-- the icon should be appearing on your screen or device. There you go.

FELINA ROMERO: Oh, OK.

THERESA ANCELL: There we go. Thanks for that.

FELINA ROMERO: It's Felina Romero. F-E-L-I-N-A R-O-M-E-R-O. I would like us all to recognize that one barrel of oil produces four to seven barrels of produce water, which is wastewater filled with 500 to 1,000 different unknown chemicals. In 2018, \$248 million barrels of water was used. That equals out to 10 billion gallons of produce water. And this data came from the New Mexico Environmental Department.

I actually got this sheet from the New Mexico Environmental Department, as well, and it says what is in produce water. Although there isn't currently a comprehensive understanding of every chemical or pollutant that could be found in produce water, we do know that produce water can contain a mixture of chemicals that are used in wells-- ones that are naturally occurring in the groundwater, and some that are created due to the breakdowns or reactions of added and natural chemicals.

Indeed, co-produced water can contain heavy metals like arsenic and lead, carcinogenic radioactive elements like radium 226, and toxic chemical additives that aren't completely used up-- like benzene. We learned a lot about the chemicals used in fracking, and therefore that might be presented in produce water. Therefore, the frack focus website, where operators in New Mexico have reported to use 500 chemicals since 2013.

I'm going to skip a little head. And it says, nationally, lecture reviews of peer reviewed papers have identified that over 1,000 chem compounds are used in produce water. So after you guys extract the oil from the ground the waste, we're left with this waste, this produce water, which is actually poisonous water that is left for us to store, for us to get rid of.

And I would once again like us all to recognize that this is very toxic materials that could poison and disrupt the whole water cycle itself. And we do not need to put this type of compounds in our water whatsoever. And we need to extend the comment period and even extend it even further So? It could be in person.

THERESA ANCELL: 30 seconds.

FELINA ROMERO: [INAUDIBLE] show up. And that's it for me. And please stop doing them in the morning. It's very sad-- and too sad to confront in the morning.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Felina. We appreciate your comment. OK, we would like to now welcome back Aaron. And Aaron, we would like to just provide you the opportunity to speak. We won't start the timer since we know that you are here representing the pueblo of Acoma. So we'd like to have you be able to openly to provide your comments.

So Aaron, can you confirm your audio for me, please?

AARON SIMS: Yes. Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: I can hear you wonderfully. Thank you, Aaron.

AARON SIMS: Thank you, Theresa. I'll reiterate a little bit of what I said before my time ran out. Just to remind the agencies that upon the issuance of the draft RMPA at the end of February, Acoma, as well as other stakeholders and consulting tribes, were engaged in a three day Section 106 meeting. So we lost daytime during that time.

And in those Section 106 meetings, if you recall-- those objectives that we were intending to complete during that time were actually left incomplete. And it was with mutual agreement to reconvene and complete those objectives just two weeks later. So the stakeholders like Acoma and other pueblos lost additional time in reviewing the draft RMPA because we were attempting to complete those objectives from those Section 106 meetings.

But as you know, in the two weeks thereafter, the COVID emergency prompted the BLM and the BIA, at the urging of consulting tribes, to postpone that March 18 and following April Section 106 meetings. If you recall, we attempted to have that March 18 meeting, but we all got on the line and mutually agreed that that meeting could not go forward and those objectives were postponed, perhaps indefinitely, at that time.

And that was the correct choice. And that was, I think, taken in large part because of additional guidance that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation had issued regarding the participation of tribes and the problems they would have participating during this ongoing emergency. I think Acoma would reiterate that that guidance should be well taken by the agency and should be actually adopted in this EIS process.

Because this EIS process and this draft RMPA is heavily dependent upon the analysis in the Section 106 process that is thus far incomplete. So I think that advisement should be well taken. But again, the emergency, the COVID emergency continues to this day and is a large-- and is the entire focus of the pueblo right now. And this emergency has therefore coincided almost entirely with this public, with this 90 day public commenting period.

So Acoma reiterates its request for an extension of the May 28 deadline and opposes these virtual meetings as a meaningful method of public and tribal participation. Acoma then also requests tribal consultation on the draft RMPA/EIS at a time when tribal state and federal public health directives indicate it's safe to meet in person. We also reiterate the request that I know you've heard mentioned previously by other pueblo in the All Pueblo Counsel of Governors of a request made on behalf of the All Pueblo Counsel, of which Acoma is a member, made by Chairman Governor Chavarria earlier this year directly to interior.

Acoma further adopts by reference the public comments made by APCG on Thursday May 14 during this virtual meeting. If forced, Acoma intends to comment on this important draft document. But the unwillingness to consider Acoma and other stakeholders' ability to meaningfully participate will undermine the efficacy of this NEPA process. I'd like to just add two additional pieces of information and observations.

Just yesterday Acoma-- I was informed that Acoma extended its closure of the pueblo and essential tribal governments through the end of this month. So through June 1, so well past, or past the May 28 public commenting period. If all goes well, Acoma does intend some phased

reopening of its tribal government, but that's largely going to limit-- still have significant limits on staff attendance as well as travel restrictions within the community, within the state, and without-- and outside the state.

So there's still going to be significant, I think, challenges for Acoma to participate. And still a large focus will remain the protection and safety of its community. I don't know what the community order will be, but that's from what I understand how tribal government would hopefully be moving forward at the end of the month.

The other observation I do want to make in regards to this platform is I know that having seen some of the replays of the past two meetings, I know there is a difference between the accessibility of folks able to use, who have adequate internet to use the Zoom application and those folks who are forced to call in on cell phones or landline or whatever they have. One of the functions that I've noticed in terms of equal opportunity to fully engage is actually the chat feature that is being used as part of this Zoom function.

I know in the previous, in some of the previous meetings, federal team or representatives aren't soliciting comments from folks who deliver those comments, either via the-- when it's their turn to speak. But there is the functionality on the Zoom of this Q&A section. And I see, you know, Becky Boyle-- I haven't met you, Becky, but I do know William Penner from EMPSi on here-- who are able to in some instances answer some limited questions and provide some information on that function.

And that function I'm assuming is not-- is available for those who are calling in on the phone. So I just want to note that, as part of this record, that in terms of equal opportunity to have comment and feedback, that there is a discrepancy between those who can call in on the Zoom internet function or those who are calling in on their phone. So that's something that I think should be noted.

In my opinion, it's going to silence a lot of the feedback that you will be getting from folks who don't have access to internet. And as you're well aware-- or maybe you're not-- Acoma is largely one of those communities that lacks broadband access. So if you were to have Acoma people calling in, they wouldn't have the ability to use those kinds of functions-- if they're able to get internet or even cellular coverage to begin with.

So I'll end my comments there, Theresa. So thanks for letting me take up a little bit more time. I appreciate it.

**THERESA ANCELL:** Really appreciate your comments and all of your feedback, Aaron. Thank you so much for joining us. At this time, that concludes our portion where we have listed commenters. But we're not-- we will hold the line open, and we would like to extend the courtesy to all of our participants at this point. If you would like to make a verbal public comment, you can use the Raise Hand feature.

If you're on your cell phone or on the telephone, press \* 9, and \* 9 will allow you to show up with your hand raised on the platform. And then if you're on the web-based, navigate to the Participants tab, and there you should find a Hand Raised icon.

At this point, I would like to announce Rebecca. Rebecca Sobel has her hand raised.

REBECCA SOBEL: Can you hear me?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

THERESA ANCELL: There you are. Hi Rebecca. We can hear.

REBECCA SOBEL: Hi.

THERESA ANCELL: Go ahead, please.

REBECCA SOBEL: Do you need me to spell my name again?

THERESA ANCELL: Yes, please.

REBECCA SOBEL: R-E-B-E-C-C-A S-O-B-E-L. And I just wanted to thank you for allowing government and tribal officials-- or, elected and tribal officials to speak without time limits. That's very important. I wanted to make the-- I mean think we've heard overwhelmingly about how tribal and New Mexico families are literally dealing with life or death emergency circumstances as a result of the coronavirus epidemic.

Well, BL-- this process has also been called out for its insensitivity to those real life or death circumstances. In addition to this process being woefully inadequate and insensitive to the needs of the public right now during coronavirus, the Bureau of Land Management Farmington field office is still moving forward approving new fracking wells in the greater Chaco area by adhering to a 2003, outdated Resource Management Plan, which this amendment proposes to supplement, but still doesn't analyze the difference between the cumulative impacts between horizontal multi-stage drilling and traditional vertical wells.

This is a difference of between 1,000 and 10,000 feet of drilling, massive amounts of water quantity and quality pollution, massive amounts of air pollution, and serious and significant impacts on local communities and disenfranchising and fragmenting local communities' social fabric of their community life. Right now the Bureau of Land Management is asking Navajo community members to show up at on-site inspections where wells sites are being proposed in open disregard to shelter in place, stay at home orders.

It's beyond disrespectful, and frankly unimaginable, that the Bureau could be moving forward with activities that directly jeopardize and exacerbate people's health problems in the middle of a respiratory pandemic. So not only am I echoing the calls to suspend and extend this process so that people can deal with real world, real life immediate problems, I'm also asking the Bureau of Land Management-- and reaffirming the asks for the Bureau of Land Management-- to suspend

all related oil and gas drilling decision making in this area while people cannot respond and meaningfully engage in any form of public process, including on-site oil and gas inspections and citing.

And it's ludicrous that the agency would be thinking about drilling more wells when oil and gas is revenue negative right now for New Mexico. And for the price per barrel of oil has never been lower in the United States. Thank you for your comment-- for the time. Thanks, everyone for their comments. I cede the rest of my time.

THERESA ANCELL: Thanks, Rebecca. We appreciate your comment. We have Jolene, Jolene Catron. You are up next. Jolene, you may have to unmute on your end, on your computer.

MODERATOR: Yeah, Jolene. I think we saw you mute and unmute quickly. So you might need to hit that button one more time just to be sure that-- we're not hearing you at this point. So just be aware of that. So if you just touch your screen on your device or display, hit it one more time and then hit the Mute button.

Maybe what we could do is we could give her the virtual microphone again, and that that might prompt her to be able to unmute. We're not able to unmute her directly. She has to unmute the button herself once we give her the microphone. So Jolene, we see that you have the virtual microphone right now. You just have to hit the button on your iPhone device display, or click on the Unmute button on your on your computer, if you're using that

THERESA ANCELL: Well, we-- there we go. Jolene, you should be able to speak now. She hit it back again.

MODERATOR: So Jolene the other option-- the other possibility here is that you're pushing down on your space bar, and you have maybe something on your space bar and that's preventing you from being heard. The space bar sometimes will be a constant mute button on Zoom. So if you have a piece of paper or a phone or something that might be on your space bar, that might be what's causing the problem and holding you in a mute situation.

So that could be the other situation that's going on. We're still not able to hear you, though, so just be aware of that.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Art.

MODERATOR: Yeah. And let me try one more thing here to see if I can help the situation.

THERESA ANCELL: It looks like she--

MODERATOR: Yeah. So did you did you see it come and go again?

THERESA ANCELL: I did.

MODERATOR: So I think there is-- I think there is a space bar or something that's being depressed that's not allowing her to be heard. There must be something going on possibly with her device. Yeah. We see you raising your hand, Jolene, but there is a microphone icon that you have to touch in order to be heard.

JOLENE CATRON: Sorry about that.

MODERATOR: Yeah. There you go. Good. So we'll let you go now.

JOLENE CATRON: I just wanted to ask real quick if you could please provide that information again on how to access or how to request the document by mail.

THERESA ANCELL: Absolutely, Jolene. Yes, let me pull that up. One second, OK? Again, I would like to-- if you would like to request a copy of the EIS, as Jolene had stated earlier, you can contact Sara Scott at the BLM. Her phone number is 5 0 5 5 6 4 7 6 8 9. 5 0 5 5 6 4 7 6 8 9. And that's for Sarah.

Sarah's email is [sscott@blm.gov](mailto:sscott@blm.gov). G O V. Sorry. Again, that's [sscott@blm.gov](mailto:sscott@blm.gov). And Mr. Robert Begay. Robert is with the BIA Navajo regional office. And Robert's phone number is 5 0 5 6 3 8 5 1 5. Again, Robert Begay. 5 0 5 6 3 8 5 1 5.

And Robert's email is [robert.begay1@bia.gov](mailto:robert.begay1@bia.gov). Again, [robert.begay1@bia.gov](mailto:robert.begay1@bia.gov). Thank you, Jolene. At this time we are still accepting public comments, so if anyone would like, please raise your hand on your device, \* 9 on the phone, and the Participants tab and Raise Hand function on your online.

We have just over 30 minutes available. I do want to let everyone know that we will hold the line open. We will continue to monitor for folks raising their hand up until our 11:00 AM end time. We do a phone caller that would like to provide a comment. Thank you. The last four digits of your number are 6 1 0 8, and you should have the ability to speak now.

ROGER A. LEWIS: Yes.

THERESA ANCELL: Can you test your audio?

ROGER A. LEWIS: Good morning.

THERESA ANCELL: Good morning. We can hear you great. Can you please state your name and spell it?

ROGER A. LEWIS: My name is Roger, first name. Middle initial, A. Lewis. L-E-W-I-S. From Standing Rock Chapter House, or District 15 area.

THERESA ANCELL: Perfect. Thank you, Roger. Go ahead.

ROGER A. LEWIS: Yes. I didn't get the first part of your meeting. I guess I was kind of just going back and forth on how to access your meeting. But it sounds like you were talking about gas and oil on lands, I guess, BLM lands, and so forth.

I guess my comment would be that I think we should still have some meetings maybe after this thing is over. That we should all-- you know, the surrounding communities should be invited and have individuals voice their opinions on all of the process of what's going on. I think without all this, you know, we're in a place where, an area-- Northwest area, which is McKinley, Cebolla, and San Juan, which is kind of hard hit by this pandemic.

And we don't really have access to a lot of communication things like laptops or computers and what have you. And I'm just saying that maybe more comments would be made, you know. Other than that, you know, maybe even meetings with a lot of distancing, you know, and walls, what have you. But I kind of read a little bit on the newspaper.

It's on the newspaper in Gallup. And that's how I got this phone number again. I was listening on the radio, too, driving around. And I couldn't get the phone numbers really in line when you're driving around with you talking, giving out phone numbers. But that's it. I guess on all cultural sites should be avoided, and things like that.

And you know, where it impacts the native culture and traditions, you know, plants and what have you stuff like that-- herbal plants. And you know, that is my comment. So I hope you'll all understand that we understand that this needs to be done very, very-- with everybody involved. Like I said, with the communities, the respective chapters around those areas that are impacted. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you so much, Roger. We really appreciate you taking the time to call in and track the number down. We appreciate your attendance. We would like to also remind everyone that we do have translators available, as well. If anyone on the phone would like to leave a comment in Navajo, you can.

Then we'll hold the line open until 11:00. And the floor is still open for anyone who would like to raise their hand to provide a verbal comment. You have just at 30 minutes. Looks like Mr. Sims. Mr. Sims is wanting to have, provide another comment.

AARON SIMS: Yeah. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you.

AARON SIMS: Again, this is Aaron Sims. I think one of the other things that I think, while I'm sitting here kind of plugging around the e-planning website and looking at this Zoom feature, I notice that e-planning, the recording is only up to May 14. The May 14 meeting, I think, has been posted on your e-planning website. Posting--

I think posting the last few meetings on Facebook isn't a viable means of providing the public comment and shouldn't be treated as the agency providing, meaningfully providing that



information to everyone. And one of the things that I'm really concerned about is the gentleman who just spoke before me who's calling in on the phone wouldn't have, wouldn't be privy to the virtual public meeting materials.

Wouldn't be privy to the now 23 questions that have been responded to. The 23 questions and answers that have been posted on the Zoom Q&A feature. And I have no idea what Q&A feature, Q&A information was delivered at the prior three meetings. So there's pertinent information in some of these responses that, you know, conceivably would help public commenters shape their opinions, shape their comments.

And that kind of information just isn't available. And certainly the e-planning website is about now-- you know, is old by two meetings. So coming in today, if folks had wanted to be caught up on what was previously said to help them form their opinions, that information isn't available. And shouldn't be-- and just because of its posting on Facebook, a private website, shouldn't mean, shouldn't be an excuse for justifying from the federal site that adequate information was disseminated prior.

So I just want to make that comment. Because as much as folks are limited in their-- there's different levels of limitation in being able to fully participate in this. And I think that that's becoming more and more apparent as we sift through all this information that the agencies have posted online, have made available via not only their e-planning, but on other private websites like Facebook.

So I think that's problematic here and should be taken into account and noted. So thanks, Theresa.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you for that feedback, Aaron, and your comment. We really appreciate it. I'd just like everyone to know that we are still taking public comments. If you're on the phone, you can press \* 9. That will raise your hand. If you're on the phone, you can go to the Participants tab, click on it, and you will see the Raise Hand icon.

We have just under 30 minutes available for anyone. Like I said earlier, we're going to keep the line open. And we really appreciate everyone's comments. We highly value your input. Looks like Fern. Fern is available for another public comment.

Thank you, Fern. You should be able to speak.

FERN CERECERES: Yes. Question. When you're dealing with the tribal lands, the ownership has spread throughout the family. And many of the family doesn't truly understand how that works. And you end up getting only one person's opinion.

In fact, after doing a study in another city here on the reservation, we're well aware that allottees associated with this town have not, let's say, signed off on. Yet BIA and the Navajo Nation move forward with creating this entity. And I'm leaving the name out because I don't want that town--

But people who are aware of the reservation may be able to know who it is. But they created their own little township. And the best way to describe it is you let somebody come onto the land and turn around-- and how would I best put this? You say, go ahead and build your store.

And that owner of the land later decides, well, I want the land back. And you never had proper signatures, so they can get the land back. What is the BIA doing to ensure they're getting-- or have they already obtained the rights to where they're wanting to, unfortunately, frack. And I don't want to get into the frack, because I think there's been enough comment on that.

It is not a safe process, but somebody is pushing this. And that's just what I want to bring up is ownership and actual comments from people who are there, or compensation, needs a lot of research. There are many entities that have failed to properly document who has the land.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Fern. I really appreciate your comment. I would like to remind everyone that we do have another meeting scheduled. And that meeting will be Monday, May 18 at 9 AM. You can sign up, again, on the BLM's website. We'll get over that information here in a little bit, as well.

The recordings will be posted. I apologize that they're not up there yet. They will be posted today by 1:00 PM-- all of this, all of the previous recordings, and this one, as well, up there today. At this time we'll still be accepting comments. So please use your Raise Hand feature by hitting \* 9 or the Raise Hand icon on your computer.

We do welcome your comments and we really, really appreciate them. I don't see one at this time. So I'm going to try to play a little song so that we don't have just the blank space. We got some feedback on that. So if- it looks like we got Felina back. Pardon me. Felina.

FELINA ROMERO: Thank you so much. It's Felina, F-E-L-I-N-A R-O-M-E-R-O. I just wanted to bring this to everyone's attention. We have 65,052 active oil and gas wells in New Mexico right now. The number of inspectors we have with the Oil Conservation Division is nine, and with the New Mexico Environmental Department it's seven.

So seven people were able to conduct 224 total inspections of last year. And with the Oil Conservation Division with nine people, they said they were able to conduct 29,936 inspections. And those numbers seem fairly odd. And I also wanted to bring to everyone's attention that in 2019, there was produce water incidents. There was 772.

With the crude oil, there was 435. With the natural gas and methane, there was 210 incidences. And a total of 1,558 spills had happened last year. That's all the spills that goes down into our groundwater, into our land. It could go out and affect the animals that indigenous people rely on to hunt.

I just wanted to bring that to our attention how many oil and gas rigs we have, and how many explosions and incidents we had. I also wanted to bring to light my friend Penny who has a oil rig 100 feet in her home, and it exploded with produce water all over her house. Recently, her dogs had drank some water that came from the sky.

It was just rain that was sitting there. And he drank the water and got sick and he was seizing up and having some very bad difficulties. And her dog had died just by drinking the runoff water that came down from the rain. So our rain and our land and our home is already being affected. And it's already going through apocalyptic side of things.

And we do not need any more of these wells in our homeland.

THERESA ANCELL: 30 seconds.

FELINA ROMERO: We just start putting people lives over the profit of these corporate greed. And please listen to us and hear us and feel us. That's it. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Felina. We appreciate your comment. At this time we will still keep the floor open. So we welcome anyone that would like to make another public comment. If you've made one already, you're more than welcome to make another one. We do have about 20 minutes left. So we want to extend the offer to all of you.

Please, please join us to make a comment. You can hit \* 9 on your phone, the Raise Hand feature on your device. I would like to let everyone know that I misspoke a bit earlier. And I really apologize. These recordings take some time to process.

And so I got some confirmation that we will have the recordings available tomorrow. So my apologies for misspeaking. I didn't mean anything by it. So tomorrow, you should be able to access. Um, the first one is on the BLM e-planning. And then we will have yesterday's two meetings and this morning's meetings on there.

I do want to announce, as well, there will be some information. I think Jill discussed this earlier. But we do have information in Navajo language. So if you go to that website, there will be a newsletter that provides the information on the project. And that was translated into Navajo, and it will be available in audio file.

You can also request a copy, a paper copy of the EIS from the project managers, as I mentioned before. We're going to put their information back on the screen here in a little bit. So you'll have the opportunity to see that, and we will read it off again. OK. I'm not seeing anyone raising their hand. So again, please raise your hand.

You can also give your verbal comment in the Navajo language or your native language. We will have translators available after the meeting to translate your message. Your comment. Excuse me. Thank you, everyone. I'm going to turn my phone-- my microphone and my video off while we wait to see if anyone else would like to provide a comment. We'll get back on here in five minutes if we haven't heard from anyone.

And I will repeat the methods that you can provide a comment by. And how you can raise your hand during this live virtual public meeting. Thank you, everyone. Like I was saying before, we do have some music that was recommend we start playing so that there's not just dead air, just silence here on the phone.

So we are going to track with that music. It looks like Megan's getting it going for us. You can mute the music using your app if you don't like it. Or there should be a way to control the volume. But we put it very low and are just going to see how that works versus the silence.

Since we did receive that feedback. Thank you, everyone. And if I don't see a hand raised, I will come back on five in five minutes. And let's just say it again. \* 9 or the Raise Hand feature. Thank you.

Thanks, Megan. If you could stop the music, please, we do have Jeremy back on. Jeremy. You should be able to speak now, Jeremy. Can you--

JEREMY NICHOLS: Yeah. Hi there, Theresa. Again, this is Jeremy Nichols. I'm the climate energy programming director for Wild Earth Guardians. And you know, I just want to comment again that I wish the BLM would actually engage the participants at this meeting like any other public meeting. And it's really disappointing that the Bureau of Land Management is letting these meetings turn into dead air.

And I appreciate that the music, or the choice to play music as opposed to silence. But I think it just speaks volumes to the fact that the Bureau of Land Management is not adequately engaging the public here. And I really wish that the BLM officials who are apparently listening-- at least that's what we're being told, but we have no confirmation of that.

I wish they had the courage to actually show their faces and actually talk to us and actually engage the public. I think it's very disappointing that our public agency, an agency that's charged with protecting and managing public lands and public resources, refuses to hold itself accountable to the public. Refuses to actually engage in a dialogue with people who are concerned and who have questions and comments around how public lands or resources should be managed under this Resource Management Plan Amendment.

Just want to get that on the record again. And I hope it changes. Doesn't seem like it will. The Bureau of Land Management for some reason seems dead set on making this a one-sided public participation opportunity, and not actually engaging in dialogue. I think it's incredibly unfortunate.

I wish the agency would show some humanity here, and not just in terms of engaging the public, but actually acknowledging the fact that communities that are impacted here are, they're suffering. They're managing a lot right now in terms of the coronavirus pandemic. And the Bureau of Land Management in New Mexico just seems completely incapable of acknowledging the human dimension to this issue and to the impacts of their actions.

It's border line callous from our perspective. And I think the agency should be ashamed of itself. The fact that the agency hasn't even responded to the request for an extension of the public comment period. It's unfathomable. I mean, you guys have received requests from New Mexico's congressional delegation, state officials, tribal officials, the public, concerned organizations. And there's been zero response.

It's just unclear what is going on in this agency. And is there an actual human--

THERESA ANCELL: 30 seconds.

JEREMY NICHOLS: --an actual human being on the other side of this. It's not clear. It's not clear. And I wish the agency would actually show its face and confirm to us that they're actually humans on the other side of this listening and taking our concerns into consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to comment again.

THERESA ANCELL: We thank you for your comment, Jeremy. Appreciate it. I'll give it a couple minutes here to see if anyone has a comment for the Resource Management Plan Amendment, Environmental Impact Statement to the Farmington Mancos-Gallup Resource Management Plan Amendment, Environmental Impact Statement. Our virtual meeting for this.

So I would like to, again, welcome you to provide a verbal comment. We really appreciate these verbal comments. Everything is very important in this process. So again, \* 9 unmutes your phone. Or there's a Raise Hand feature under the Participants tab. We have 10 minutes left.

So that's plenty of time for anyone that would like to provide a comment. We recommend you raise your hands and give us a comment. We appreciate it. At this time, I will start my video and mute and monitor for more comments, for more hands being raised to provide a comment. Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Megan, if you could stop the music now. We do have a phone participant that would like to provide a comment. The last four digits of the phone participant's phone number are 2 0 6 8. Following our phone participant, we have Aaron Sims, who would like to make another comment.

Our phone participant should have the ability to state their comment now. Can you hear me?

EDDIE BEGAYE: Yes. Good morning. My name is Eddie.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

THERESA ANCELL: Morning, Eddie.

EDDIE BEGAYE: Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: I can hear you, sir.

EDDIE BEGAYE: Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: Yes, sir, Eddie. I can hear you. Can you hear me.

EDDIE BEGAYE: Yes, I can. My name is Eddie Begay. E-D-D-I-E B-E-G-A-Y-E. Did you get the information?

THERESA ANCELL: Got it, Eddie. Thank you so much, sir. And you can go ahead with your comment when you're ready. You will, again, have three minutes. Thank you.

EDDIE BEGAYE: Thank you. I have relatives in the Chaco area, and I'm also an allottee. I recently received a shutdown notice from the gas producers from my allotment. And the reason given was the COVID-19. The startup for production that they gave is unknown at this time.

And so the allotment that I have was issued to my grandparents by the Secretary of Interior in 1919 and 1920. This was when Woodrow Wilson was president. The oil and gas was leased by BIA. I think it's important that we know where the allotments were issued from and how the oil and gas were leased.

The participants in what we're talking about today is a part of it. And it's very important. And so I do have some questions. First question I have is that, does this amendment address the downturn of oil and gas development? And the second question I have is, how long will this amendment and EIS be valid?

And I hope my concerns that I expressed this morning are considered substantive by the federal government. And so thank you very much for allowing me to make a comment on this subject that we're talking about this morning with the EIS. Thank you.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Eddie. We very much appreciate your comment. Aaron?

AARON SIMS: Can you hear me?

THERESA ANCELL: I can hear you, Aaron. Thank you.

AARON SIMS: OK. Yes, this is Aaron Sims. If it's OK, if the federal agency wants to respond to Eddie's question, I can wait if you want to respond to his questions.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Aaron. At this time we are in the public format comment session. And so if you can go ahead with your comment, we will proceed. Thank you.

AARON SIMS: OK. And I think that makes the point. You know, an individual like Eddie-- thank you for your comment and question-- I would hope would be answerable if we were 1, in a public forum, or 2-- or public in-person forum. But even 2, that it would be answerable if Eddie were calling in on the Zoom platform.

There are a number of questions similar to Eddie's that I think could be clarified that have been attempted to be clarified by facilitators on the Q&A function of the Zoom platform. And so I raise that as a point because in trying to, as part of the goal for today of explaining the RMPA, explaining those kinds of questions that Eddie has about applicability of this RMPA and other

questions, there's a difference here in terms of participation and being able to have access to information that the agencies are trying to disseminate here.

So I raised that as a point. And secondly, I appreciate-- well, actually, probably I don't appreciate the music. And I think that dead time could be better spent perhaps going through some of those Q&A questions that are accessible to the limited public who's able to use Zoom. Certainly not accessible to those individuals on the phone.

That folks like William Penner are providing information, they're responding to questions with sections in the RMPA of where you can look for this. They're putting information there about applicable executive orders. And so there's a huge discrepancy about participation here. And so, you know, I really don't appreciate the music and the dead time.

If you're trying to provide information to the public, both the public being accessible here on the internet or accessible by phone, then provide that kind of information which would otherwise be known to all of us. It's not enough to say, we'll put it up on line afterwards. Because we're here in this meeting now, and we came to this meeting now, today, to get the information we need to respond to you.

Because who knows if we'll be able to call in on Monday. So I think it's pretty ridiculous in terms of that kind of information and limitations. You know, I'd like to know who's on the line today from the federal folks. It's not enough to just be saying we'll post it later. I'd like to be able to have that information.

So if there's appropriate people who need to respond, they can respond. So that's my comment. But thank you, Theresa.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you so much, Aaron. We do appreciate your feedback. It's time we have two more minutes remaining. We have Jesse Deubel.

JESSE DEUBEL: Hello, Theresa. It's Jesse Deubel, again, with the New Mexico Wildlife Federation. And I want to say very quickly that I appreciate everybody who's provided comment during this meeting, those on the Zoom and by telephone. I think some wonderful points have been made. I think these comments have been very genuine and very authentic.

I imagine many of the people commenting here today have also sent letters. I certainly know that I've spent a number of letters. I've sent letters to many individuals throughout the agency. And what I've requested is that we extend the comment period and that we put this process on hold until after the pandemic so we can have meaningful engagement from the participants that are unable to participate currently with this virtual format.

And what I'd like to say is that none of my letters have been responded to. And I think it's important that people recognize that when the agency doesn't respond, that in itself is a response. And I want the public, and I want the agency to really understand what the agency is telling us when they choose not to respond to our requests and our questions. Thank you very much.

THERESA ANCELL: Thank you, Jesse. We appreciate that comment, and all that feedback. It's time. It is 11:00. If anyone still wants to make a comment, you can for a few more minutes here. You can press \* 9 or Raise Your Hand feature. Turning it back over to Jill after we're done here, and she's going to give us some more information on how to comment and things like that.

So please stay-- please stay tuned. And we will turn it over to Jill here in just a minute. I don't see anyone raising their hand. Again, please raise your hand if you want to provide a comment. We have just a few more minutes here. I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone.

Really appreciate everyone's comments, feedback. And I hope you all have a great rest of your day. I'm going to sign off. And when Jill is ready, she will begin. Thank you, everyone. Stay safe.

JILL ARAGON: Hi, everyone. Again, my name is Jillian Aragon, and I work for the Bureau of Land Management. And on behalf of the 50-plus BLM and BIA ID team members that are here with us today, we want to thank you for your time and comments. The BLM and BIA value your input and will continue to accept your comments on a draft EIS through May 28.

Any comments received or postmarked after the May 28 date may not be considered. Please note that the May 28 date is the deadline for the public comments. However, the BLM and BIA will continue to consult with tribes, consulting parties, and cooperating agencies beyond this date and throughout the EIS development process.

I will be sharing the information that you can use to provide additional comments and who to contact directly if you need further assistance. You can go to the BLM's E-planning tab at the online portal [www.blm.gov/nm/farmington](http://www.blm.gov/nm/farmington). You can also leave a voicemail comment by calling 7 2 0 2 1 3 5 7 8 6.

Or you may mail your comments to either project manager at the following addresses-- Sarah Scott at 6 2 5 1 College Boulevard, Suite A in Farmington, New Mexico, 8 7 4 0 2. Or to Robert Begay at 3 0 1 West Hill Avenue in Gallup, New Mexico, 8 7 3 0 1.

If you have additional comments or questions that you need some clarification for, please contact BLM project manager Sarah Scott at 5 0 5 5 6 4 7 6 8 9, or BIA project manager Robert Begay at 5 0 5 8 6 3 8 5 1 5. There is one more meeting scheduled after this one, and that'll take place on Monday, May 18, at 9 AM, mountain standard time.

You may register for this meeting either online or by calling 5 0 5 6 3 5 9 7 0 1. This concludes today's virtual public meeting for the Farmington Mancos-Gallup Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and associated Environmental Impact Statement. Thank you for joining us today. Have a great day, and stay well.