

Appendix C

Public Comments on the Draft EIS

BLM received approximately 600 letters, faxes, and emails in response to the Draft EIS. All of the comment letters postmarked prior to end of the official public comment period are deemed to have been timely and legally filed. Because of a misprint on the notices that advertised the public meetings, which stated that the end of the comment period would be April 31, 2007 [sic], BLM accepted letters that were postmarked by May 2, 2007. BLM carefully analyzed these comments in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations and other policy guidance. The guiding policy is found in 40 CFR 1503.4 (Response to comments):

- (a) An agency preparing a final environmental impact statement shall assess and consider comments both individually and collectively, and shall respond by one or more of the means listed below, stating its response in the final statement. Possible responses are to:
 - (1) Modify alternatives including the proposed action.
 - (2) Develop and evaluate alternatives not previously given serious consideration by the agency.
 - (3) Supplement, improve, or modify its analyses.
 - (4) Make factual corrections.
 - (5) Explain why the comments do not warrant further agency response, citing the sources, authorities, or reasons which support the agency's position and, if appropriate, indicate those circumstances which would trigger agency reappraisal or further response.
- (b) All substantive comments received on the draft statement (or summaries thereof where the response has been exceptionally voluminous), should be attached to the final statement whether or not the comment is thought to merit individual discussion by the agency in the text of the statement.

The CD-ROM found in the back pocket of this Final EIS contains all of the timely filed comment letters and BLM's response to substantive comments. Many changes to the EIS text have been made as result of the comment letters. The definition of substantive is set out in the regulations above, and in Answer 29 of the "Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations" (48 Fed. Reg. 18027 (1981)). While BLM has not responded to every statement issued in the comment letters, it will consider all comments – substantive or otherwise – in its decisionmaking process.

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