

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Finding of No Significant Impact  
Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2012-0006-EA**

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**April 2013**

**Kinder Morgan 3D Seismic Survey Project  
Doe Canyon Deep Unit**

***Location:*** Dolores County, Colorado, in portions of Townships 39, 40, and 41 North and Ranges 16, 17, and 18 West on the east and west side of the Dolores River Canyon (see EA, Figure 1 in Appendix A).

***Applicant/Address:*** Kinder Morgan CO<sub>2</sub> Company, LP  
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# **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

## **Environmental Assessment**

**DOI-BLM-CO- S010-2012-0006-EA**

### **Doe Canyon 3D Seismic Survey Project**

#### **Background**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis (EA) (DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2012-0006-EA) for a proposed action to address a 3-D seismic exploration project on BLM and Forest Service lands on the west and east sides of the Dolores River canyon, respectively, in Dolores County, Colorado. The Doe Canyon Seismic Project area is approximately 121 square miles (77,338 acres), including public lands administered by the USFS and BLM and private lands. The project is located in Dolores County, Colorado, in portions of Townships 39, 40, and 41 North and Ranges 16, 17, and 18 West on the east and west side of the Dolores River Canyon (see EA, Figure 1 in Appendix A). The EA is available at the Tres Rios Field Office and is incorporated by reference for this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A No Action Alternative (Alternative A), the proposed action (Alternative B), and Alternative D were analyzed in the EA.

#### **Finding of No Significant Impact**

I have reviewed the EA for the proposed Kinder Morgan 3D Seismic Survey Project (DOI-BLM-CO-S010-2012-0006-EA). After consideration of the environmental effects as described in the EA, I have determined that Alternative D (Selected Alternative), with the project design features, will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the San Juan/San Miguel Planning Area RMP/FEIS (Sept. 1985). Alternative D is described in more detail in the environmental assessment (EA at 20).

I have considered the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.27), with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA:

#### **Context**

The Selected Alternative (Alternative D) is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 121 square miles (77,338 acres) of BLM and Forest Service administered lands, which by itself do not have international, national, regional, or state-wide importance. The action is located in Dolores County east of the town of Dove Creek. The economic activity of the area is primarily agricultural based. Natural gas development, recreation, hunting, and tourism are also important economic sources for the county.

#### **Intensity**

The following have been considered in evaluating intensity for this proposal:

**1. *Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.***

The EA analyzed effects to resources that may be both beneficial and adverse. Measures designed to reduce impacts to all affected resources, such as cultural, wildlife, and recreation, were incorporated into the action alternatives as design features. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA (beneficial or adverse) and associated appendices are considered significant.

**2. *The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.***

The Selected Alternative (Alternative D) is not expected to significantly impact public health and safety (EA at 70-71). The effects of seismic exploration projects are well known and documented.

**3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.***

The historic and cultural resources of the area have been inventoried and potential impacts mitigated in the design of the Selected Alternative (Alternative D).

Wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, and ecologically critical areas were all considered when analyzing the Selected Alternative (Alternative D) in the EA (EA at 28). As described in Chapter 3 of the EA, considering the design features of the Alternative D, effects are not expected to be significant.

The following components of the Human Environment and Resource Issues are not affected because they are not present in the project area: Prime or unique Farm Lands, and Wilderness.

**4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.***

On December 5, 2011, a public service announcement was issued for the local newspapers (Cortez Journal and Dove Creek Press) that explained the Proposed Action and provided opportunity for the public to ask for more information or provide comment. One article about the project appeared in the Cortez Journal. In addition, a public information meeting was hosted by the Dolores County commissioners on January 17, 2012.

Forty scoping comment letters were received and are located in the project file at the Dolores Public (EA at 7). Issues were incorporated and addressed in the EA. There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts.

**5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.***

The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

**6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.***

The actions considered in the selected alternative were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and other alternatives are described in Chapter 3 of the EA. Section 3.19 of the EA describes the cumulative effects of the action. This action is not expected to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

**7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impact.***

The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in Chapter 3, Section 3.19.2 of the EA. The action is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impact.

**8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.***

The project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural inventory has been completed for the proposed action, and consultation with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has been completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and they have concurred with a "no adverse effect" on cultural resources. The SHPO concurrence letter is part of the project file at the Tres Rios Field Office in Dolores, CO.

**9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, or the degree to which the action may adversely affect: 1) a proposed to be listed endangered or threatened species or its habitat, or 2) a species on BLM's sensitive species list.***

Mitigating measures to reduce impacts to wildlife and fisheries have been incorporated into the design criteria for the Selected Alternative (Alternative D).

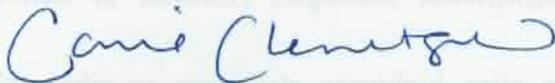
Two species, the Mexican spotted owl (endangered) and the Gunnison sage-grouse (proposed endangered), have potential habitat within the project area vicinity and are discussed in greater detail below. The remaining 17 listed species were eliminated from further discussion due to a lack of habitat in the project area or because their known range is located outside of the project area.

A two-year survey for Mexican spotted owl will be completed prior to implementation of the project. No evidence of owl occupation has been found during the first year of the survey. The project design criteria is such that appropriate mitigation will be implemented depending on whether Mexican spotted owls are discovered or not. Critical habitat for Gunnison sage

grouse has been proposed by the USWFS for the BLM-administered lands west of the Dolores River canyon. This proposed critical habitat is listed as unoccupied and the temporary impacts from the seismic project activities will not alter the habitat (Chapter 3 of EA). Therefore, the Selected Alternative will not have significant effects on Gunnison sage grouse.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.**

The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process. Letters were sent to 24 Native American tribes concerning consulting party status. A response was received from the Hopi Tribe. The Tribe's concerns were addressed in the EA (Section 3.6) and the Tres Rios Project Manager met with Tribal representatives at their office on March 20, 2013 to discuss this and other projects. In addition, the project is consistent with applicable land management plans, policies, and programs (EA at 3).



4-10-13

Connie Clementson  
Field Manager  
Tres Rios Field Office

Date