



FACT SHEET

BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

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HiLine Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)

FACT SHEET: How to Submit Public Comments

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The comment period for the HiLine Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will end on June 20, 2013. This information provides helpful tips on how to write effective comments.

Why Public Comments are Important

The BLM is a federal land management agency tasked with managing public lands in the public interest. As such, we factor in your issues and concerns through the public comment process. Comments that are most useful provide relevant and new information with sufficient detail. Substantive comments are compiled in a published document as an appendix to the Proposed RMP and Final EIS. Individual response letters will not be provided. A substantive comment is a comment that does one or more of the following:

- Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the RMP and EIS;
- Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the environmental analysis;
- Presents new information relevant to the analysis;
- Presents reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EIS; or
- Causes changes or revisions in one or more of the alternatives.

BLM reviews all comments and identifies which comments are substantive and which are not. Comments that are not substantive will be considered, but will not be included in the published appendix. For example, a comment such as, “we disagree with Alternative B and believe the BLM should select Alternative C,” is noted, but will not receive a formal BLM response in the appendix.

How to Review and Comment

Start by reading the reader’s guide and executive summary. The ‘readers guide’ describes how the document is organized. Reviewing that information will help direct your attention to key portions of the plan. The executive summary will provide an overview of why the RMP is being revised, a summary of each alternative, and the anticipated effects of each alternative. At this time, Alternative E is the BLM’s preferred alternative.

Identify the topic that is most important to you. Explore this topic in more detail. We suggest you use the following steps to guide you through the process:

- Focus on one topic at a time.
- Find the associated maps for your topic and refer to them as you conduct your detailed review.
- Begin your review of each topic by reading about it in Chapter 3, which describes the current conditions of the affected environment.
- Next, look at the proposed management actions and alternatives in Chapter 2 (summarized in Table 2.21).
- Conclude your review by reading the impact analysis on your topic in Chapter 4 (summarized in Table 2.22).

Repeat the steps above for each topic of interest. As you are conducting your review, look for the absence of known data or discrepancies between data and written statements. Are multiple interpretations of the data possible? Can you develop and explain an alternative interpretation?

As you write your comments, consider the following general “Dos and Don’ts” of commenting:

THE DOs	THE DON'Ts
<p>Suggest specific changes in the document, and provide the page number and section of the document in your comment.</p> <p>Clearly identify: Where the issue or error is located, Why you believe there is an error, and Alternative ideas about how to address issues or errors</p> <p>Provide constructive solutions with documentation or resources to support your recommendations.</p> <p>If applicable, include your formal and informal education or training as it relates to your observations and comments.</p>	<p>Avoid vague statements or concerns. Vague statements do not suggest a specific change or give the BLM something on which to act.</p> <p>Understand that a comment is not a vote for or against one of the alternatives. The BLM must rely on supporting information, <i>not on the number</i> of comments received. Numerous comments expressing the same concern or issue is considered to be one comment.</p> <p>Avoid using form letters to convey your point. Your unique way of writing or phrasing a comment helps the BLM understand your point of view.</p>

The following is an example of a helpful and a comment that is not very helpful:

HELPFUL COMMENT	NOT SO HELPFUL COMMENT
<p>I disagree with the visual resource management class II designation for the area between Low Valley and High Valley. This area currently has a number of developed structures such as radio towers, power lines and fences which detract from the view already. This area also contains valuable mineral deposits which are currently being developed and that development is expected to continue. The classification should be changed to class III.</p>	<p>The preferred alternative has too much visual resource management class II.</p> <p>Why is this comment not helpful?</p> <p><i>The comment is not specific enough for the BLM to consider in balance with other resource issues. It does not contain supporting information or rationale.</i></p>

How to Obtain a Copy of the Plan

- Download the document from the HiLine RMP website at: <http://www.blm.gov/8qkd>.
- Visit your local library where hard copies are available for review.
- Stop by the Great Falls, Havre, Malta or, Glasgow BLM Office to pick up a CD of the document. A limited number of hardcopies are available.

Where to Submit Comments

Email: BLM_MT_HiLine_RMP@blm.gov Fax: (406) 262-2856
 Mail: District Manager, BLM, 3990 Hwy. 2 West, Havre, MT 59501

Please Remember to Submit ALL Comments by June 20, 2013.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.