



United States Department of the Interior



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To: DMs, FMs, and DSDs

From: State Director, New Mexico

Subject: Rotation of Federal Oil and Gas Lease Sales and Lease Parcel Reviews

The Bureau of Land Management New Mexico State Office (BLM NMSO) implemented a rotational sale schedule effective with the April 2014 Oil and Gas Lease Sale. This change means that the BLM NMSO is still holding four sales per year, but only offering for sale Federal mineral estate within a certain District, Field and/or geographic area once per year. Table 1 depicts the rotational sale schedule.

Table 1 Rotational Lease Sale Schedule

Oil & Gas Lease Sale	District or Office
April	Oklahoma Field Office
July	Pecos District
October	Farmington District
January	Las Cruces District or Rio Puerco Field Office

BLM New Mexico was the only organization in the agency not rotating sales between separate district/field offices. Instruction Memorandum 2010-117, Oil and Gas Leasing Reform, encouraged state offices to, “develop a sales schedule with an emphasis on rotating lease parcel review responsibilities among field offices throughout the year to balance the workload and to allow each field office to devote sufficient time and resources to implementing the parcel review policy established in this IM.” Because of key oil and gas leasing vacancies, and the continuous workload associated with offering lease parcels in multiple offices four times a year, it became necessary for the NMSO to commence rotating oil and gas lease parcel review responsibilities among its field offices.

A rotational sale schedule allows state and field office staff to work on other priority assignments such as inspection and enforcement (I&E), Application for Permit to Drill (APD)

processing, lease assignments and bond adequacy reviews. It also provides the field office staff additional time to focus on large scale project reviews such as Environmental Impact Statements associated with Resource Management Plan revisions and amendments. In addition, it allows the state office to complete leasing reform stipulation consistency review, provide necessary I&E and APD support to the field and improve the efficiency and environmental robustness of the leasing program through the use of Information Technology for Resource Management (IT4RM).

The BLM NMSO also incorporated two additional months to the current lease parcel review schedule. One additional month was added for field office reviews, and one additional month for state office reviews. This is effective with the October 2014 Oil and Gas Lease Sale. The additional time frames have been added into the initial field office review of the draft parcel lists, development and review of environmental assessments and comment and protest responses. The parcel review process from the Expression of Interest (EOI) cut-off deadline to the actual Sale is now a 9 month process¹. Leasing Reform also encouraged, “State offices will extend field office review timeframes, as necessary, to ensure there is adequate time for field offices to conduct comprehensive parcel reviews.”

The NMSO and the field offices will still follow the guidance outlined in Oil and Gas Leasing Reform, IM WO 2010-117 and Fluid Mineral Leasing and Processing of EOIs in relation to the NEPA Process, IM NM 2012-031.

For questions related to this IB and process, contact Becky Hunt, Natural Resource Specialist, at (505) 954-2154.

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¹ Prior to Leasing Reform, the process was 5 months and with the implementation of Leasing Reform it became a 7 month process.

