

How to Comment Effectively

Public comment opportunities allow you to be involved in the decision-making process and to ensure your voice is heard. People often have valuable information about places and resources they consider important, information BLM may not have readily available.

The most effective comments will relate directly to BLM's proposal. Comments that provide relevant and/or new information with sufficient detail are most useful and are referred to as substantive comments. Substantive comments are used to prepare and revise the analysis documents.

Substantive comments will:

- Provide information that the BLM should consider, such as:
 - Identifying factual errors
 - Presenting new information relevant to the analysis
 - Questioning, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information
- Identify different ways to meet the Purpose and Need for Action, such as:
 - Providing solution oriented or specific examples
 - Describing alternatives
 - Describing methods to mitigate or reduce potentially harmful effects
- Present information relevant to the analysis of environmental effects, such as:
 - Suggesting methodologies for analyzing environmental impacts
 - Questioning, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of methodology for or assumptions used in the analysis (i.e. describe an alternate methodology commenter prefers and why)
 - Identifying credible sources of information which will aid in analyzing environmental effects
- Describe reasons you agree or disagree with the proposal
- Describe changes you would like to see and why you believe the changes are important

Comments that are not helpful:

- Vote for or against an alternative
- Agree or disagree with the proposal without reasons
- Agree or disagree with laws, regulation, or BLM policy
- Discuss other projects or other areas
- Contain vague, open-ended questions

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Example of Substantive Comments	Example of Non-substantive Comments
I disagree with closing Road 245. I need this road to access my private land.	Stop closing our roads!
Grazing should not be allowed along Dry Creek because they are removing all the vegetation and making the stream muddy.	No grazing should be allowed.
Please move the Blue Trailhead to the 1717 Road junction because it would be closer to the overlook and it would be easier to turn around.	The Blue Trailhead is in a stupid location.
The amount of livestock grazing should be maintained or increased for many reasons. Livestock grazing has long been an important part of the culture and heritage of the American West. Proper livestock grazing can improve range conditions and contribute to the local and regional economy.	Grazing is important to me.
Cows should not be allowed to graze along the Bird Trail. This area used to be one of my favorite hiking trails and is an outstanding natural area. Cows eat all the plants and leave manure. This area does not look very natural after the cows leave.	Cows should be excluded from hiking areas.

There are several websites that contain information on commenting and involvement in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. You may find these websites helpful.

Council on Environmental Quality

CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508): <http://energy.gov/nepa/downloads/regulations-implementing-procedural-provisions-nepa>

CEQ *A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard*:
<http://energy.gov/nepa/downloads/citizens-guide-nepa-having-your-voice-heard>

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

BLM Washington Office NEPA Program:
<http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/planning/nepa.html>.

This site includes links to the NEPA Handbook (H-1790-1 01/2008, see Chapters 6 and 9) and the NEPA Web Guide (see Chapter 6, Section 6.9). This site also includes a link to the Department of Interior NEPA regulations.

Planning Handbook:
http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wo/Information_Resources_Management/policy/blm_handbook.Par.38665.File.dat/h1601-1.pdf

BLM Planning Regulations (43 CFR 1600):
http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_02/43cfr1600_02.html