

**Executive Summary**  
**Scoping Report and Public Scoping Comments**

**Gun Barrel, Madden-Deep, Iron Horse**  
**Natural Gas Development Project**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

Prepared for:

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

EnCana Oil and Gas (USA), Inc. (EnCana), Burlington Resources Oil and Gas Company LP (Burlington), and Noble Energy, Inc. (Noble), collectively designated as the “Companies,” propose a full field development scenario in the Gun Barrel, Madden-Deep, and Iron Horse (GMI) Federal Exploratory Units in the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lander Field Office (FO), Wyoming, with the eastern portion of the units located in the jurisdiction of the BLM Casper FO, Wyoming.

The Project Area includes approximately 147,255 acres of mixed federal, state, and private lands in Fremont and Natrona counties, Wyoming. Of the total area, approximately 98,278 acres (66.7%) are administered by the BLM and 12,514 acres (8.5%) are administered by the State of Wyoming; the remaining 36,463 acres (24.7%) are private land. The Lander FO and Casper FO manage the BLM surface lands and the federal mineral estate within the Project Area. The Project Area is located within all sections of Townships 36 through 39 North, Ranges 88 through 92 West, 6th Principal Meridian. The towns of Lysite and Lost Cabin are approximately in the center of the Project Area, which is bisected by Fremont County Road 117 or Badwater Road.



The GMI Project Area consists of three unitized areas within the Gas Hills Management Area, which was analyzed in the current (1987) Lander Resource Management Plan (RMP) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and was implemented through its Record of Decision (ROD) (BLM 1987)<sup>1</sup>. As of December 1, 2007, the

**The Companies propose to infill drill 1,300 additional wells within the 147,255-acre Project Area.**

Project Area contained approximately 486 producing gas wells. Due to the success rate of existing drilling activities conducted since the 1960s, the Companies anticipate that infill drilling would facilitate the extraction of additional gas resources and extend

production. The Companies propose to infill drill 1,300 additional wells within the same 147,255-acre Project Area. Of these additional wells, approximately 100 wells would be directionally drilled, all of which would be located in the Gun Barrel Unit. The anticipated life of each producing well is expected to be approximately 40 years. This report provides an executive summary of the Final Scoping Report for the GMI Natural Gas Development Project (GMI Project) EIS being prepared by the BLM Lander FO and Casper FO. The scoping period began on June 5, 2008, with publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register, and ended on July 21, 2008. The full Scoping Report is available upon request at the

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<sup>1</sup> BLM. 1987. Record of Decision for the Lander Resource Management Plan. U.S. Department of Interior. Bureau of Land Management, Lander Resource Area, Rawlins District. Rawlins, Wyoming.

Lander FO and includes a description of the public scoping process, a description of the two public scoping meetings, a summary of the comments submitted by the public, and an overview of the issues identified through all scoping comments.

Scoping meetings were held in Riverton, Wyoming, on June 17 and in Casper, Wyoming, on June 18, 2008. Meetings were held from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m. at each location and included informational presentations of the proposed GMI Project, relevant resources located

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in the ProjectArea, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. BLM resource specialists and representatives from the Companies were available to answer questions from the public. A total of 27 individuals from the public registered at the scoping meetings. The BLM accepted scoping comments during scoping meetings, and comments were also accepted via letter, fax, and electronic mail during the scoping period. During the official scoping period, the BLM received 251 substantive comments from 45 respondents. For organization and analysis purposes, comments were categorized into 19 topic areas.

The table below indicates the relative interest of respondents who submitted written comments towards various broad topics. This enumeration is not intended to show bias towards any issue, but rather to indicate the level of interest in various issue areas. All issues will be addressed equally in the EIS.

### Comment Breakdown

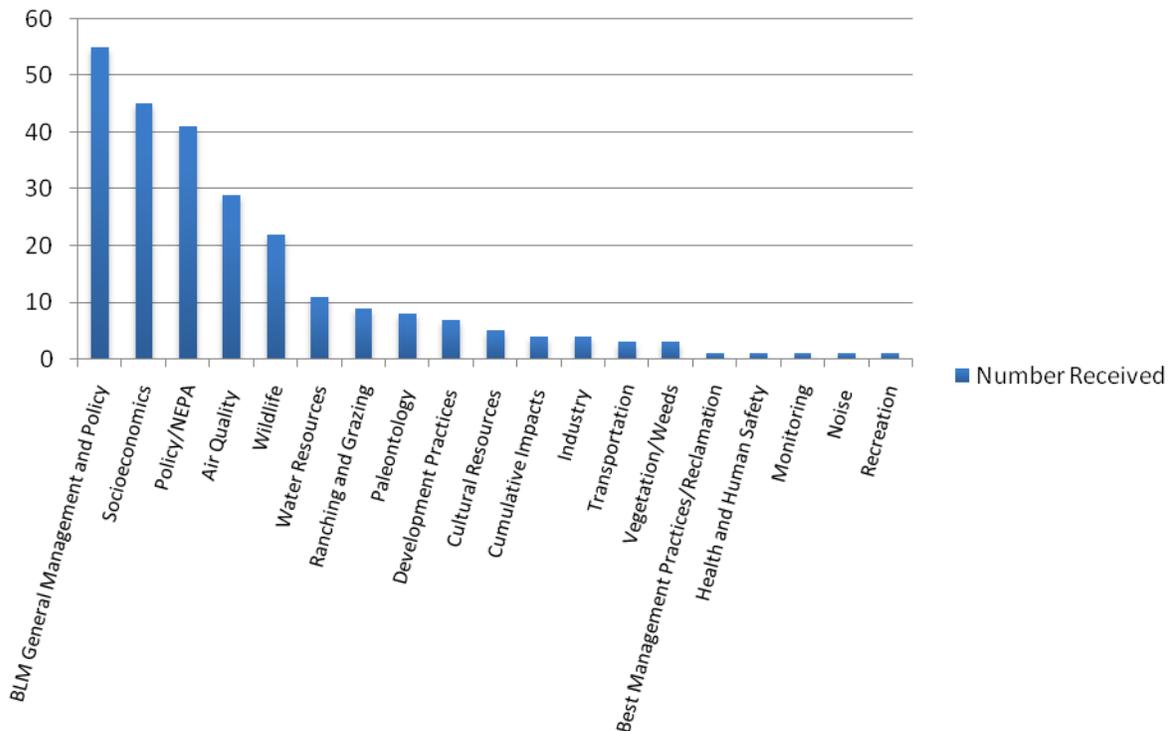


Table 1. Comment by Category.

Comment Category	Number Received	Percentage*
Air Quality	29	11.5 %
BLM General Management and Policy	55	22.0 %
Best Management Practices/Reclamation	1	0.4 %
Cultural Resources	5	2.0 %
Cumulative Impacts	4	1.6 %
Development Practices	7	2.7 %
Health and Human Safety	1	0.4 %
Industry	4	1.6 %
Monitoring	1	0.4 %
Noise	1	0.4 %
Paleontology	8	3.2 %
Policy/NEPA	41	16.3 %
Ranching and Grazing	9	3.6 %
Recreation	1	0.4 %
Socioeconomics	45	17.9 %
Transportation	3	1.2 %
Vegetation/Weeds	3	1.2 %
Water Resources	11	4.3 %
Wildlife	22	8.7 %

\* Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## COMMENT SUMMARIES

### AIR QUALITY

Most comments directed toward air quality centered on the potential increase in emissions from sources such as drill rigs, compressors, and fugitive dust, and how the proposed GMI Project has the potential to contribute to an increase in greenhouse gases, such as methane, and climate change. Respondents suggested that monitoring should start immediately to establish baseline conditions.

Direction was also provided regarding air quality modeling efforts, stating that modeling cannot start until all alternatives have been developed, an air quality protocol has been drafted and approved, and an emissions inventory has been reviewed and approved by the Air Quality Stakeholders. Several respondents noted other impacting preparatory issues not fully addressed, including well location, plans for tackling dust



control, considering other sources of air pollutants, and concern regarding the authority and regulatory roles of the BLM.

### **BLM GENERAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY**

Comments in this category generally focused on the BLM's mission to protect multiple uses on public lands with respondents noting consistency in development with regard to the nation's energy policy. Participants stressed compliance with legislature intended to minimize environmental impacts but when asked about development, respondents were split on whether or not the BLM should impose further restrictions and regulations, even in areas that have already been leased.

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### **BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND RECLAMATION**

One respondent addressed the need for timely reclamation and mitigation measures as well as potential consequences for failing to accomplish these efforts.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Comments primarily expressed concern for preserving unique historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources. Respondents noted the importance and significance of non-renewable cultural resources in the Project Area and consulting with tribes but were split on the issue of cultural resource evaluation. Some believe cultural resources tend to be overly evaluated, stating that action recommendations should be outcome-based, while others claim these resources are not given enough value and would like to see sufficient data collected before any action is taken.

### **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Respondents note the NEPA requirement to consider all connected, cumulative, and similar actions. One respondent suggests re-evaluating the use of political boundaries for a cumulative impacts analysis, and others propose that cumulative assessment should include the impacts from reasonably foreseeable energy development.

### **DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES**

**Respondents suggested a phased or paced well development as a means to reduce environmental impacts.**

Comments in this category focused on the rate of well development and consideration of the option of requiring multiple wells per pad. Respondents suggested a phased or paced well development as a means to reduce environmental impacts, with one comment stating that the BLM should fully consider requiring multiple wells per pad.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SAFETY**

Participants expressed a general concern regarding the emission of noxious gasses that they believe would increase as a result of the GMI Project, as well as elevated ozone levels and water pollution.

## **INDUSTRY**

Generally, respondents agreed that natural gas is safe and dependable and that the proposed GMI Project would be good for the local economy and is consistent with the National Energy Policy Act.

## **MONITORING**

One comment urged the BLM to be more diligent in its monitoring efforts to ensure necessity and reasonableness.

## **NOISE**

Comments related to noise centered on disturbance to hunting and tourist activities and possible impacts to wildlife, with commentators suggesting a plan be developed to inform individuals who may be impacted.

## **PALEONTOLOGY**

Overall, respondents were concerned with the potential for destruction to significant resources in the Project Area due to surface disturbance, vehicle traffic, off-road vehicles, and erosion. Local museums with extensive record of the area should be consulted in order to reduce cost and minimize destruction to fossil resources.

## **POLICY AND NEPA**

Respondents suggested a thorough analysis of the alternatives and the development process, which would include a cost-benefit analysis, obtaining up-to-date sound data, and public involvement. One respondent asked the BLM to consider unquantifiable environmental amenities, values, and environmental objectives when crafting the purpose and need statement.

## **RANCHING AND GRAZING**

Comments directed toward grazing focused on impacts to livestock, forage, and rangeland health. Respondents expressed concern that individual and cumulative impacts would increase costs and decrease revenues of grazing permittees and that a more face-to-face approach be taken to minimize transitional pressure. It was suggested that compensatory mitigation/strategies discussions take place. In addition, it was suggested that the EIS disclose the impacts to social values, such as open spaces, aesthetics, and historical influences of the area, as well as potential impacts to the ability to provide food and habitat for domestic and wild animals.

## **RECREATION**

One comment expressed concern for potential impacts to hunting and would like the BLM to ensure that hunting opportunities are not diminished.

## **SOCIOECONOMICS**

Comments directed toward socioeconomics focused on the economic effects to local economies. The EIS should include a comprehensive economic analysis and outline the economic benefit of the GMI Project. One respondent suggested that this analysis should also include any adverse effect to local economies based on the potential revenue they stand to lose if the GMI Project is not approved and how seasonal restrictions would impact work and revenue flow. Some comments suggest analyzing the potential economic effects of including a No Action Alternative that limits or eliminates additional oil and gas development in the area.

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## **TRANSPORTATION**

Comments in this category expressed concern about increased traffic and accidents. Respondents suggest that the State look at making improvements to the section of Highway 20/26 between Casper and Shoshoni.

## **VEGETATION AND NOXIOUS WEEDS**



Common concerns in this category include removal of native vegetation, impacts to sensitive plant species, and increased noxious weeds. Participants suggest a thorough biological survey take place to ensure species protection as well as options for future restoration and noxious weed control during the GMI Project.

## **WATER RESOURCES**

Comments related to water resources focus on the potential impacts to surface water and groundwater with respondents noting the importance of protecting riparian areas, wetlands, and floodplains. Suggestions include reinjection or treatment of produced water and development of Best Management Practices to control erosion. Respondents would like the BLM to ensure that sufficient baseline data is available or developed for the analysis and develop a monitoring plan to track any groundwater impacts. Also suggested is the

development of mitigation measures to protect water sources, such as using backflow preventer and adequate casing.

## **WILDLIFE**

A variety of wildlife concerns were raised during scoping. Primary issues include the protection of big game and sage-grouse and their habitats during oil and gas development. In addition, impact on food resources and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals was also discussed, as well as “take” of protected species. Multiple respondents want to see the BLM adhere to and vigorously enforce legislation and wildlife seasonal stipulations, while others feel these stipulations would cause undue delay and may actually have negative socioeconomic impacts.

One respondent would like to see a projection of future increases in roads and invasive species from the GMI Project, as well as projected future loss of big game winter range. Literature and site-specific data on the Project Area should be used as reference throughout the duration of the GMI Project.