



BCC 2016-066  
May 23, 2016

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Director Neil Kornze  
Bureau of Land Management  
1849 C Street North West, Room 5665  
Washington, D.C. 20240

*Re: Proposed Resource Management Planning Rules, 81 Fed. Reg. 8674*

Dear Director Kornze:

We are writing you to commend you and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for your efforts to improve BLM's planning process (Planning 2.0) and better address the diverse interests found in Missoula County and other communities across the western United States.

Missoula County is approximately 2,600 square miles in size, and federal management in the county accounts for 52 percent of the land ownership. The BLM manages roughly 23,000 acres for the public in Missoula County and the sustainable management of these public lands is vitally important to the residents we represent. Our citizens and local economies depend on state and federal lands for water quality and quantity, as well as for multiple sustainable uses ranging from outdoor recreation to livestock grazing to mineral exploration and development. Consequently, we wish to thank the BLM for proposing to address their land management options from a landscape perspective. This approach recognizes that the management of federal lands has a direct impact on other properties well beyond those close to or adjacent to BLM managed land.

We support the provisions of the BLM's Proposed Resource Management Planning Rules, 81 Fed. Reg. 8674 (Feb. 25, 2016). These rules provide additional opportunities for public involvement earlier in the planning process, including the chance to review preliminary resource management alternatives and preliminary rationales for those alternatives. This early public involvement will help resolve conflicts and produce a Resource Management Plan that better reflect the needs of our citizens as well as others who use the public lands and have a stake in their future. Equally important is the improved openness and transparency the rules bring to the process, allowing any local government to actively participate and share information on issues critical to local residents and their elected representatives.

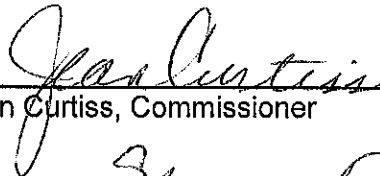
The proposed rules continue to provide for coordination with state and local representatives in order to ensure, to the extent allowable under federal law, that Resource Management Plans are consistent with state and local land use plans, as provided in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

Thank you for considering our comments. If you or your staff have any questions, please feel free to contact us or our Chief Planning Officer, Patrick O'Herren, at your convenience. Mr. O'Herren's direct line is 406-258-4981.

Sincerely,  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Nicole Rowley, Chair



Jean Curtiss, Commissioner



Stacy Rye, Commissioner

Cc: Montana Delegation  
Joe Ahsor, Missoula Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

BCC/AC