

- Effects on quality of life for residents and visitor experience issues.
- Effects on National Forest recreation opportunities.
- Effects on Paleontologic Resources.
- The cumulative effects of the proposed oil and gas activities combined with the impacts of other actions on a wide spectrum of ecological and human environment areas of concern.
- Broadscale effects on the region including the neighboring National Parks.
- Adequacy of the Bridger-Teton National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement oil and gas leasing scenarios for site-specific analysis and decision making.

The previously submitted specific issues relating to the above general categories will be considered in this Environmental Impact Statement. Other potential issues may be identified during the current scoping period.

The Forest Service is seeking information and comments from Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as individuals and organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed action. The Forest Service invites written comments and suggestions on the issues related to the proposal and the area being analyzed.

Information received will be used in preparation of the draft EIS and final EIS. For the most effective use, comments should be submitted to the Forest Service by March 2, 1998.

The Responsible Official is Thomas Puchlerz, Acting Forest Supervisor, Bridger-Teton National Forest, Jackson, WY. The decision to be made is whether or not to authorize the BLM to offer specific lands for lease, subject to the Forest Service ensuring that correct stipulations are attached to the leases issued by the BLM (36CFR228.102(e)). The draft EIS is expected to be available for public review in January 1999, with a final EIS estimated to be completed in July 1999. The comment period on the draft EIS will be 45 days from the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process. First, reviewers of draft EIS's must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and contentions. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp. v. NRDC*, 435 U.S. 519, 553 (1978). Also,

environmental objections that could be raised at the draft EIS stage but that are not raised until after completion of the final EIS may be waived or dismissed by the courts. *City of Angoon v. Hodel*, 803 F.2d 1016, 1022 (9th Cir. 1986), and *Wisconsin Heritages, Inc. v. Harris*, 490 F. Supp. 1334, 1338 (E.D. Wis. 1980). Because of these court rulings, it is very important that those interested in this proposed action participate by the close of the 45-day comment period so that substantive comments and objections are made available to the Forest Service at a time when it can meaningfully consider them and respond to them in the final EIS.

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments on the draft EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if comments refer to specific pages or chapters of the draft EIS. Comments may also address the adequacy of the draft EIS or the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the draft EIS. Reviewers may wish to refer to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act at CFR 40 1503.3 in addressing these points.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR 215 or 217. Additionally, pursuant to CFR 1.27(d), any person may request the agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that, under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only limited circumstances, such as to protect trade secrets. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality, and where the request is denied, the agency will return the submission and notify the requester that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address within 10 days.

Dated: January 19, 1998.

Michael Schrotz,

Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor, Bridger-Teton National Forest, USDA Forest Service.
[FR Doc. 98-748 Filed 1-14-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration

Pilot Program for Barge Inspection Services

AGENCY: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: GIPSA is announcing its plan to conduct a pilot program allowing more than one official agency to provide barge inspection services within a single geographic area.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Neil E. Porter, Director, Compliance Division, STOP 3604, (Room 1647-S), 1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-3604.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Neil E. Porter, telephone 202-720-8262.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Sections 7(f) and 7A of the United States Grain Standards Act, as amended, (Act) were amended by the U.S. Grain Standards Act Amendments of 1993 (Public Law 103-156) on November 24, 1993, to authorize GIPSA's Administrator to conduct pilot programs. These pilot programs would allow more than one official agency to provide official services within a single geographic area without undermining the declared policy of the Act. The purpose of pilot programs is to evaluate the impact of allowing more than one official agency to provide official services within a single geographic area.

GIPSA considered several possible pilot programs as announced in the March 14, 1994, **Federal Register** (59 FR 11759) and the March 10, 1995, **Federal Register** (60 FR 13113). In the September 27, 1995, **Federal Register** (60 FR 49828) GIPSA announced two pilot programs, "Timely Service" and "Open Season," starting on November 1, 1995, and ending on October 31, 1996. These two pilot programs were extended to October 31, 1999, as announced in the October 3, 1996, **Federal Register** (61 FR 51674).

The March 14, 1994, **Federal Register** invited comments on a possible pilot program for barges on selected rivers or portions of rivers as defined by GIPSA.

This was one of five potential pilots being considered. GIPSA received 41 comments. Seven specifically talked about the pilot programs for barges. Of those seven, five supported the program for barges, and two did not.

Subsequently, GIPSA determined that this proposed pilot program was too narrow in scope for the initial round of pilot programs.

Subsequently, some official agencies expressed their belief that a pilot program on the Mississippi River would be beneficial because there is some uncertainty over the boundary lines between official agencies along the Mississippi River. At one point GIPSA considered the boundary to be the middle of a river. Official agencies found this very difficult to work with, and GIPSA subsequently changed the boundary definition to the edge of a river. The middle of a river was viewed as an open area to be served by either contiguous official agency.

In 1993, because of flooding along the Mississippi River, GIPSA granted a temporary exception for certain types of barge inspections along portions of the Illinois, Mississippi, and Missouri Rivers. This exception made the covered river areas open to any official agency for probe sampling and inspections to expedite barge traffic. GIPSA noted no problems resulting from this exception.

In addition, some facilities located along the Mississippi River (Birds Point Terminal, Bertrand, Missouri; Peavey Company, St. Louis, Missouri; ADM, Winona, Minnesota; and Consolidated Grain, Caruthersville, Missouri) have received services from alternative official agencies under the existing pilot programs. There have been no significant problems resulting from the barge inspections on the Mississippi River under the existing pilot programs.

GIPSA announced and invited comments on the following four possible pilot programs in the October 10, 1997, **Federal Register** (62 FR 52967).

1. Barges on the Mississippi River may be sampled by probe by any official agency; or

2. Barges on the Mississippi River may be sampled by probe at any location by the official agency designated to serve the geographic area within which the barge was loaded; or

3. Barges on all rivers may be sampled by probe by any official agency; or

4. Barges on all rivers may be sampled by probe at any location by the official agency designated to serve the geographic area within which the barge was loaded.

Comments were due by November 15, 1997. GIPSA received seven comments:

five from official agencies (two private and three States) and two from trade organizations. Four official agencies supported option 4 and one supported option 2. Both options 2 and 4 would limit the pilot program to the official agency serving the area within which the barge was loaded. Option 2 is further limited to the Mississippi River while option 4 covers all rivers nationwide. The official agencies cited their belief that options 2 and 4 would provide more flexibility to the grain industry, and their concern that options 1 and 3 would weaken the official system. Allowing unrestricted access to grain barges would cause their fixed cost to rise as high inspection volume customers are lost and they are left with the responsibility of providing service to infrequent users of official services. This, they believe, would encourage official agencies to focus on serving high volume customers and encourage customers to look for better grades. Official agencies would tend to become national, contract with one large customer, and lose integrity and impartiality.

One of the three State official agencies did not favor projects opening up agency geographic areas while the other two State official agencies supported option 2 and 4 respectively. The State official agencies noted other concerns including their limitations on travel, inability to add or decrease staff quickly, and their stronger neutrality and integrity base on non-profit status compared to most private official agencies.

GIPSA recognizes these concerns, but believes that there are adequate safeguards in the proposed pilot programs.

Two national grain trade organizations supported option 3. Option 3 would allow barges, nationwide, to be probe-sampled by any official agency no matter where it is located or where it was loaded. These two organizations cited their belief that option 3 would provide grain handlers another option for obtaining timely official inspection services when the official agency serving them is busy. It would, they believe, provide better access to service, and foster official agency emphasis on quality and efficiency. They also believed that market driven-competition can effectively and efficiently address many of the factors that discourage use of the domestic official inspection system. They believe the other proposed pilot programs would be too limited in scope.

After consideration of all relevant information, GIPSA is announcing that effective March 1, 1998, and ending

October 31, 1999, concurrently with the two existing pilot programs, barges on all rivers may be sampled by probe by any official agency. During this time, GIPSA will monitor all pilot programs. Anytime, GIPSA determines that a pilot program is having a negative impact on the official system or is not working as intended, the pilot program may be modified or discontinued. If GIPSA determines that a customer violates the provisions of this pilot program, such customer will no longer be permitted to participate in the program.

Official agencies participating in this pilot program must notify GIPSA's Compliance Division at 202-720-8525 or FAX 202-690-2755 any time they sample a barge outside their assigned geographic area.

Authority: Pub. L. 94-582, 90 Stat. 2867, as amended (7 U.S.C. 71 *et seq.*).

Dated: January 9, 1998.

Neil E. Porter,

Director, Compliance Division.

[FR Doc. 98-921 Filed 1-14-98; 8:45 am]

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ASSASSINATION RECORDS REVIEW BOARD

Sunshine Act Meeting

DATE: January 22, 1998.

PLACE: ARRB, 600 E Street, NW., Washington, DC.

STATUS: Closed.

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. Review and Accept Minutes of Closed Meetings.
2. Review of Assassination Records.
3. Other Business.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Eileen Sullivan, Press Officer, 600 E Street, NW; Second Floor, Washington, DC 20530. Telephone: (202) 724-0088; Fax: (202) 724-0457.

T. Jeremy Gunn,

Executive Director.

[FR Doc. 98-1086 Filed 1-12-98; 4:21 pm]

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COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

Agenda and Notice of Public Meeting of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, that a meeting of the Massachusetts Advisory Committee to the Commission will convene at 10:30 a.m. and adjourn at 3:00 p.m. on