

**ON MAY 2, 1982 COLORADO WAS LEFT REELING WHEN THE OIL SHALE  
BOOM WENT BUST. NOW THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WANTS US TO  
TRUST IT AGAIN...**

The BLM recently released its draft plan for commercial oil shale and tar sands leasing on our public lands. This Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) is intended to analyze the likely environmental, economic, and social impacts of oil shale development. Since research and development of new technologies will not be completed for years, the analysis in this document cannot fully anticipate all potential impacts. The commercial leasing plan also proposes to amend nine BLM Resource Management Plans (RMPs) and puts in place the necessary framework for a commercial leasing program that might begin as early as 2009. The plan details the extensive impacts to air, water, wildlife, communities and special places in western Colorado as well as Wyoming and Utah. The deadline for public comment is March 21<sup>st</sup>.

The BLM plan proposes that industrial oil shale production will monopolize 319,710 acres of public land and 41,940 acres of split estate lands spread out within the Glenwood Springs, Grand Junction and White River BLM resource areas in Colorado. The assumptions made in the plan are based on a commercial industry production estimate of 250,000 barrels of oil a day, the creation of a dozen new coal fired power plants, and use of 15% of the water of western Colorado, as well as other direct and non-direct impacts. The impacts could be even greater.

In 2005, Congress gave the BLM arbitrary deadlines to promote a federal research and development program (RD&D) – on public lands – identifying the costs and benefits of promoting oil shale as a domestic fuel source. The corporations permitted to participate in this federal program have yet to move past the initial stages of this process. Companies want to transform oil shale into petroleum using new complex, highly experimental and unproven processes. The truth is, oil shale developers don't even know if the technology works. *What's the rush?* It is a waste of taxpayer dollars to spend time writing an assessment of technologies that have not been proven through research.

Nevertheless, the BLM is rushing to complete the DPEIS process by amending relevant RMP's and advancing development of a full-fledged federal oil shale leasing program by drafting commercial leasing regulations – all without a clear understanding of the technologies that will be used. The document undertakes a conjectural and vague analysis of unproven technologies and unknowable impacts. The notion that future analyses will tier to this document is frightening—akin to building a sky scraper without a foundation. This document establishes unsound groundwork for an immense industrial transformation that may forever change the character of western Colorado.

Oil shale development is likely to occur in the Piceance Basin, a region braced for up to 50,000 new natural gas wells in coming years. The potential increased impacts to local communities would be astronomical. Colorado has been burned by the irresponsible and romantic allure of oil shale before. Public land managers must have a clearer understanding of production processes and specific impacts before sacrificing hundreds of thousands of acres of the public domain to an industry that's burned us before.

**Go to [oilshalefacts.org](http://oilshalefacts.org) for more information and comment on the plan**

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