

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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In Reply Refer To:
3809 (NV-920) P

EMS TRANSMISSION 06/03/04
Instruction Memorandum No. NV-2004-064
Expires: 09/30/2005

June 2, 2004

To: Field Managers, Nevada
Deputy State Directors and Staff Chiefs, NSO

From: State Director, Nevada

Subject: Nevada Bureau of Land Management Water Resource Data and Analysis Policy
for Mining Activities

ISSUE: The use and protection of water resources is an important environmental and economic issue. As mining has the potential to have significant quality and quantity impacts to the State of Nevada water resources, it is important and necessary that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) adequately address water resource concerns in the review of all proposed mining plans of operations conducted under 43 CFR Subparts 3802 and 3809 - Surface Management Regulations. The goals of this policy are:

- To ensure the health of the land and water resources;
- To use good science in making decisions; and
- To collaborate with appropriate Federal, State, local and tribal agencies and other affected interests.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Nevada BLM to ensure relevant water resource concerns are adequately analyzed. The Nevada BLM Water Resource Data and Analysis Policy for Mining Activities requires that when reviewing a plan of operations, relevant water-resource issues will be addressed in the plan and the associated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document.

It is also the policy of the Nevada BLM to collaborate with the appropriate State regulatory agencies, specifically the State regulatory agencies with water resource responsibilities, e.g., Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (NDCNR), Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) and Division of Water Resources (NDWR). Where applicable, the BLM will utilize the State environmental regulatory requirements, guidance, and standards as a base for analysis and/or review. In certain situations, BLM may evaluate potential impacts as a level of detail or breadth of analysis that exceeds State requirements. For example, the BLM might require a detailed geotechnical report associated with infiltration efficiency. Such departures should be coordinated with the appropriate State agency. In addition, when BLM applies an analysis that exceeds State requirements, the BLM will ensure the departure is so noted in the analysis, review and/or approval.

IMPLEMENTATION: Attachment 1, "Nevada BLM Water Resource Data and Analysis Guide for

Mining Activities" is intended as a flexible document to aid in meeting the requirements of this policy. The appropriateness of the individual discussions will depend on the issues being addressed in the specific mining/NEPA document. These guidelines will evolve as new situations are encountered. Comments will be continually solicited from field offices and the public to keep the guidance updated.

Attachment 2 provides a table of the most useful and relevant references on groundwater modeling and monitoring, aquifer testing, and analysis, and acid rock drainage testing and analysis. Also, a report titled "State of Nevada Acid Rock Drainage Testing Requirements" was distributed to all field offices under Information Bulletin NV-96-097. This report provides information on the specific State requirements associated with acid rock drainage testing.

The Nevada BLM Water Resource Data and Analysis Policy for Mining Activities and the associated guidance documents provide for the implementation of the Bureau's Acid Rock Drainage Policy, as called for in the Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 96-79, issued April 2, 1996. Copies of all relevant policies and associated guidance documents should be made available to interested parties.

CONTACT PERSON: Questions concerning this policy should be directed to Dr. Tom Olsen, Division of Minerals Management at (775) 861-6451.

Signed by:
Robert V. Abbey
State Director, Nevada

Authenticated by:
Pam Collins
Staff Assistant

2 Attachments

- 1 - Nevada BLM Water Resource Data and Analysis Guide for Mining Activities (16 pp)
- 2 - Table of References (5 pp)

