

The 2.0 Coalition

Coalition to Oppose BLM Proposed Planning Rules, Planning 2.0

March 14, 2016

OVERVIEW:

On Thursday, February 25, 2016, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued notice in the Federal Register [81 Fed. Reg. 9674 (Feb. 25, 2016)] proposing to amend their existing regulations that establish the procedures used to prepare, revise or amend land use plans pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). A preliminary review of the proposed rules makes clear that the changes are not merely procedural, but represent a fundamental shift minimizing the role of local governments in the planning process. Coordination with local governments is diminished and the requirements under FLPMA that ensure the federal planning process is consistent with local plans and policies, is all but eliminated.

The development of these proposed rules have been done under the radar by BLM in Washington D.C. There has been minimal public discussion, limited if any notice to local governments, and no oversight under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Additionally, the BLM is only allowing a shortened, 60-day comment period, which expires April 25, 2016.

To address these proposed rules, American Stewards of Liberty has been working with Kane County, Utah as well as other Counties and Special Districts to develop a strategy for preparation of a robust and comprehensive set of comments that will substantiate the reasons these rules cannot be approved. This is for the purpose of insisting the agency withdraw the rules, and if not, to challenge their implementation in court.

(To read the proposed rules go to: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/02/25/2016-03232/resource-management-planning>)

PROJECT STRATEGY:

1. Request comment extension to 180-days to August 23, 2016
2. Organize Coalition of Local Governments and other partners to oppose proposed rules
3. Develop robust and comprehensive comments for Coalition Partners to submit
4. Educate elected leaders at local and national level s to advocate for the withdrawal of the proposed rules.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMENTS:

Norm James and Dawn Meidinger of Fennemore Craig out of Phoenix, Arizona have been asked to develop the comprehensive comments for the coalition of local governments and other partners to submit. Mr. James and Ms. Meidinger have considerable experience dealing with Bureau of Land Management planning issues, and have been working with Kane County, Utah to enforce coordination in the development of the Livestock Grazing Amendment for the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. They are uniquely qualified to address the proposed planning changes to coordination as well as other critical issues.

BUDGET:

The projected budget is \$50,000. This includes development of the comments, management of the project and other expenses associated with educating leaders as to the problems with the proposed rules.

COALITION PARTNERS:

Counties, Conservation Districts and other Special Districts that are impacted by the proposed rules are invited to participate in the coalition. We believe that a large group of likeminded local governments coming together to oppose the revision will send a powerful message to the Agency as well as elected leaders in Washington DC. If your local government would like to participate, we ask that you help contribute to the expense of the project at the level most appropriate for your entity.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

- 1) Pass Board Resolution to Participate in the Coalition and Authorize Participation Fee. Suggested levels are: \$500, \$1000, \$2500, or \$5000.
- 2) Provide written paragraph describing your entity that can be inserted into the prepared comments
- 3) Send both to American Stewards of Liberty by April 15, 2016, checks made payable to American Stewards of Liberty, earmarked for 2.0 Coalition.

COMMENT SUBMISSION:

The comments will be submitted as the 2.0 Coalition. Each participant will be named on the comments, and a description of the entity included in the comment text. Once the comments are prepared, a draft will be circulated to participants for any additional considerations. The comments will be submitted by Fennemore Craig on behalf of the Coalition.