

Thank you for your comment, Joanne Harkins.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is OST2012D50202.

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OSTS 2012 Draft PEIS

Comment ID: OST2012D50202

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Attachment:

Comment Submitted:

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

I am writing to submit comments on the Oil Shale and Tar Sands Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). I am very concerned about the possible impacts of oil shale development on Glen Canyon, Grand Canyon, and the Colorado River. I believe that we need more research on the potential impacts of oil shale and tar sand development before allowing leasing of our public lands for this use. Such development could have serious and irreversible impacts, including on water supplies and quality, air quality, native ecosystems and wildlife, and recreational uses.

I urge you to choose Alternative 3, Research Only, as the BLM's Preferred Alternative in the Final PEIS. This is essential to ensure that we have the best possible information before considering opening our natural open spaces and ecosystems to the development of oil shale and tar sand resources.

Here are some of my specific concerns regarding the Draft PEIS:

* The Draft Programmatic EIS needs to ensure water quality will not be adversely effected by development of oil shale and tar sand resources. The water usage for oil shale production far outstrips the amount of oil produced, even prior to the refinement process. Water resources in the West are already overused and the effects of climate change and increased population will only add further strain to an already depleted system.

* The Draft Programmatic EIS should be conducted in such a way to address issues of dust, noise, and pollution in the affected areas. Heating oil shale in the ground can contaminate vital groundwater supplies. High salt concentrations in groundwater restricts water available to native plants and is harmful to agricultural production as well. The Colorado River Basin already spends millions of dollars annually on damages caused from high salinity.

* The Draft Programmatic EIS should address the potential encroachment on protected areas and National Parks such as Glen Canyon Recreation Area and Canyonlands National Park. This includes a thorough analysis of the damage to these priceless parks by oil shale and tar sands development.

This EIS should ensure that all alternatives seriously assess the issues outlined above. Considering the present lack of adequate information and the tremendous risks of misguided development, the only reasonable alternative at this point is Alternative 3, Research Only as outlined in the PEIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Programmatic EIS.

Sincerely,

Joanne Harkins
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