



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, D.C. 20240

MAR 24 2009

Senator Robert Bennett
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bennett:

Secretary Salazar and I have discussed your serious concerns regarding the Interior Department's approach to making land use decisions that impact Utah. In that regard, I can assure you that Secretary Salazar and I are committed to proceeding in a principled and collaborative fashion when addressing Utah land use-related matters. That includes Department activity in pending litigation regarding BLM management plans and in implementing any regulatory or policy changes affecting federal land uses in Utah. We look forward to working closely with you, your staff and with local community leaders and other stakeholders when making land use decisions that affect Utah communities.

With regard to the recent lease sale, Secretary Salazar has reconfirmed his commitment to review the basis for removing the 77 parcels from the sale. He has asked that I head up the review effort, working with the acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, the acting directors of the BLM and the National Park Service, and the acting Solicitor and/or their designees. The review would involve a thorough examination of the relevant issues associated with the 77 parcels in question, including an analysis of the administrative record, interviews with the individuals in the bureaus who have relevant information regarding the parcels, and a site visit. We anticipate that the Review Team would review the record, complete relevant interviews, and conduct a site visit by May 1. We would seek to follow up on this work and provide an internal report to Secretary Salazar by May 29. Secretary Salazar and I would brief you on the results of the review at that time.

Thank you for expressing your concerns so cogently and directly to the Secretary and me. We look forward to working with you on these important matters.

Sincerely,

David J. Hayes
Deputy Secretary Designee

Provide a detailed plan for a review of the 77 parcels that were withdrawn from the Utah lease sale, including who will undertake the review, and who within the BLM, MMS, NPS or other agencies within the Department will participate in the review, who will lead the review, and deadlines for accomplishing the review.

1. Review Process.

The review will involve a thorough examination of all of the relevant issues associated with the 77 parcels in question. The administrative record for the lease sale will be provided to the Review Team. Senior Department officials on the Review Team will be responsible for interviewing the individuals in their bureaus with relevant information regarding the parcels in question, as a supplement to the administrative record. A site visit will be conducted. Interview results, relevant documents, and bureau perspectives will be shared by all members of the team. The Review Team will present the results of the review to Secretary Salazar.

2. Timeline

The review will proceed in a disciplined and timely way. The administrative record will be provided to all members of the review team as soon as it can be made available and before it is required by the court. Assuming that the record can be made available within the next couple of weeks, every attempt will be made to review the record, conduct a site visit, and complete relevant interviews by May 1. The review team will seek to complete its work and provide a report to Secretary Salazar by May 29.

3. Composition of the Review Team

If confirmed, David J. Hayes will have overall responsibility for undertaking the review of the 77 parcels that were withdrawn from the Utah lease sale. (Due to the Employment Guidelines for Presidential Appointees in Sub-Cabinet Positions established by the Senate and the White House, Mr. Hayes cannot lead this effort until he is confirmed.) Pending Mr. Hayes' confirmation, the Review Team will consist of the acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget and the acting directors of the BLM and the NPS, and their designees. The acting Solicitor, Art Gary, will provide legal support, to the extent needed.