

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Bureau of Land Management****43 CFR Part 2360**

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**RIN 1004-AF02**

**Rescission of the Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Regulations, Issued May 7, 2024**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** Through this final rule, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rescinds and replaces the “Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska” final rule, issued on May 7, 2024, to restore regulatory clarity and align BLM’s implementing regulations with statutory requirements and national energy policy.

**DATES:** This final rule is effective on December 17, 2025.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kyle W. Moorman, Chief, Division of Regulatory Affairs and Directives, telephone: 202-527-2433, email: [kmoorman@blm.gov](mailto:kmoorman@blm.gov). Individuals in the United States who are deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability may dial 711 (TTY, TDD, or TeleBraille) to access telecommunications relay services. Individuals outside the United States should use the relay services offered within their country to make international calls to the point-of-contact in the United States.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

- I. Executive Summary
- II. NPR-A Background
- III. Need for the Final Rule
- IV. Discussion of Public Comments on the Proposed Rule
- V. Section-by-Section Analysis for Part 2360
- VI. Procedural Matters

**I. Executive Summary**

The BLM’s regulations governing the management of surface resources within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (the Reserve or NPR-A) are located at 43 CFR part 2360. This final rule rescinds and replaces the final rule promulgated in 2024, entitled “Management and Protection of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska,” 89 FR 38712 (May 7, 2024) (2024 NPR-A Rule). The BLM has determined that the 2024 NPR-A Rule conflicts with and exceeds its statutory authority under the Naval

Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976, Public Law 94-258 (90 Stat. 303; 42 U.S.C. 6501 *et seq.*) (NPRPA), as amended, undermines the purpose of that act, and is inconsistent with national energy policy. This final rule will facilitate the orderly administration of the public lands and will support the purposes of the NPRPA, including facilitating an expeditious program of competitive oil and gas leasing in the NPR-A. This deregulatory action supports the BLM’s implementation of the statutorily mandated oil and gas program activities while providing for the appropriate level of protection for surface resources, including within special areas, without subverting other statutory requirements.

The BLM published the proposed rule to rescind the 2024 NPR-A Rule in the **Federal Register** on June 3, 2025 (90 FR 23507), followed by a 60-day comment period ending on August 4, 2025. The BLM received approximately 139,757 document submissions on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), which entailed approximately 257,847 total comments from Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, State and local governments, organizations, businesses, and individuals. The BLM identified 1,463 comment submissions that were unique and responsive to the request for comments, with the remaining submissions being either duplicative form letters, non-substantive, or outside the scope of the rule. The BLM analyzed those unique comment submissions and determined that 43 submissions provided substantive input and rationale on the proposed rule.

In addition to the public-comment period, the BLM invited federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations to consult on this rulemaking process. On May 14, 2025, the BLM mailed invitation-to-consult letters to 33 Alaska native organizations in the region, including Alaska Native Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations. The BLM also emailed 26 of these letters on May 14, 2025, to those entities for whom we have email addresses. As a result of this outreach, the BLM scheduled and attended five requested consultation meetings, including: May 21, 2025—North Slope Borough; May 27, 2025—Utqiagvik Trilateral (City of Utqiagvik, Ukpigvik Iñupiat Corporation, Native Village of Barrow); May 29, 2025—Kuukpik Corporation; June 30, 2025—Arctic Slope Regional Corporation; and July 9, 2025—Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope.

The BLM received numerous substantive comments expressing support for rescinding the 2024 NPR-A Rule. Some comments agreed with the

BLM’s assessment that the 2024 NPR-A Rule exceeds the BLM’s statutory authority under the NPRPA. Among those comments, some asserted that the 2024 NPR-A Rule contradicts congressional intent, particularly regarding oil and gas development in the NPR-A, and that certain provisions in the 2024 NPR-A Rule misinterpret or unlawfully expand the BLM’s regulatory role, specifically for special areas. Additionally, some comments criticized the 2024 NPR-A Rule’s new and revised definitions such as “significant resource value” and “special areas” as vague, overly broad, and circular.

Other comments supported the rescission given the 2024 NPR-A Rule’s effect on oil and gas development, including hindering responsible development by imposing overly rigid restrictions—especially on infrastructure and commercial development; discouraging investment and creating regulatory uncertainty that could delay or prevent projects; and increasing the risk of regulatory takings. Some comments supported the rescission of the 2024 NPR-A Rule because they were concerned that it prioritized resource preservation at the expense of exploration and development.

Some comments supported the rescission of the 2024 NPR-A Rule because this final rule would more closely align the management of surface resources in the NPR-A with the national energy policy, including Executive Order (E.O.) 14153, while other comments considered the 2024 NPR-A Rule to be counterproductive to national energy security and Alaska’s economic interests.

Finally, comments expressed concern that the 2024 NPR-A Rule lacked a meaningful economic analysis and suggested that returning to the previous rule—which had guided management of surface resources for many decades—would provide a stable and efficient regulatory framework to support long-term investment and development in the NPR-A.

In preparing this final rule, the BLM has reviewed, evaluated, and provided responses to the substantive comments received during the public comment period and through Tribal consultation. The responses are located in sections II, III, IV, V, and VI of this preamble. Where appropriate, the BLM made technical changes, corrections, and clarifications to the proposed rule. These changes are specifically noted in section V of this preamble.