

File Code: 2800 (8676288)
Date: October 26, 2020

Mr. Joshua Axelrod
Senior Advocate
Natural Resources Defense Council
40 West 20th Street
11th floor
New York, NY 10011

Dear Mr. Axelrod:

Thank you for your letter of September 24, 2020, cosigned by your colleagues, to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and me requesting a 90-day extension to the 60-day comment period on proposed revisions to regulations for oil and gas resources on National Forest System lands. Secretary Perdue has asked me to respond.

The proposed revisions are primarily administrative and not expected to materially change existing analyses and decisions related to land use or post-lease permitting. Given the nature of the rule we believe the 60-day comment period provides the necessary time to identify concerns and provide comments. The public comment period will not be extended beyond the original deadline.

The proposed rule (36 CFR Part 228, Subpart E) was published in the Federal Register on September 1, 2020. It is open for public review and comment for 60 days, with a deadline of November 2, 2020. The programmatic environmental assessment, regulatory impact analysis, and civil rights impact analysis along with the preamble to the draft rule, are essential components of our open and transparent public review process. I encourage you to view copies of the supporting documentation to assist in review that can be located by searching for "FS-2020-0007" on the Web site at: www.regulations.gov.

I also encourage you to submit any additional information that you believe should be considered, prior to publication of the final rule. Any information provided will be included in the rulemaking public record.

Again, thank you for writing. I appreciate your interest in oil and gas resources management on National Forest System lands. A similar response is being sent to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

X 

for

Signed by: KATHERINE ARMSTRONG
VICTORIA CHRISTIANSEN
Chief

