United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Ely District Office
702 North Industrial Way
Ely, Nevada 89301
https://www.blm.gov/nevada

In Reply Refer To:
4120 (NVL00000)

OCT 16 2026

Certified Mail: 9589 0710 5270 0056 9391 22 **Return Receipt Requested**

City of Ely
501 Mill Street
Ely, NV 89301

Subject: Cooperating Agency Invitation for the Blue Diamond Livestock Conversion Project Environmental Assessment

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Ely District Office, Nevada, is anticipating an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze and disclose impacts associated with the Blue Diamond Livestock Conversion Project ("Project"). The proposed Project is on public land administered by the BLM and proposes to convert Sheep Animal Unit Months (AUMs) to Cattle AUMs for four grazing permits over ten grazing allotments, with proposed range improvements, including maintenance and reconstruction of existing range improvements associated with the conversion. With this letter, we are inviting the City of Ely to participate in this process as a cooperating agency.

Cooperating Agency status provides a formal framework for governmental units to engage in active collaboration with a lead federal agency to implement the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). 516 DM-1 – U.S. Department of Interior Handbook of National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures defines a Cooperating Agency as "any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency that has been designated as a cooperating agency under section 107(a)(3) of NEPA (23).

Based on our preliminary evaluation, we believe that your agency may meet the Cooperating Agency criteria. We are sending you this letter to determine your interest in, and eligibility, to collaborate with us in a Cooperating Agency relationship. Your agency is being asked to participate because your agency may have jurisdiction and/or special expertise, such as statutory responsibility, agency mission, or related program experience relevant to the decision to be made.

The regulations implementing NEPA emphasize the use of such arrangements as a means of ensuring timely coordination with local, state, tribal, and federal agencies in the preparation of NEPA analysis and documentation. The BLM places great importance on working effectively with its governmental partners through the Cooperating Agency relationship.

Cooperating Agencies may determine the level of their involvement consistent with their available staffing and resources. As a Cooperating Agency, your organization could participate in the process, assist in developing information to be included, develop and identify potential mitigation measures and alternatives, and identify pertinent information that could be useful in preparation and the overall Project proposal. Please note that Cooperating Agency participation does not necessarily imply that your agency supports the proposed Project.

Project Background

The Project proposes to convert Sheep Animal Unit Months (AUMs) to Cattle AUMs for four grazing permits over ten grazing allotments, with proposed range improvements, including maintenance and reconstruction of existing range improvements associated with the conversion. The BLM's purpose for preparing the EA is to respond to a request by the livestock grazing permittees to convert the Sheep AUMs to Cattle AUMs on ten allotments. The Project will also authorize new range improvements, or reconstruction of existing range improvements, to accommodate the conversion from sheep to cattle. The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility under Sections 302 and 401 of the FLPMA, which directs BLM to manage the public lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with land use plans. The Ely Resource Management Plan (RMP) states that installation of range improvement projects and changes in livestock management could lead to meeting the RMP goals and objectives, including the standards for rangeland health. The need is to also reduce conflicts between domestic sheep and wildlife in accordance with BLM policy. An analysis of issues is needed to determine the potential environmental impact of conversion and range improvements.

Response to this Letter

Whether you accept or decline, we ask that you make every effort to respond to this request by submitting an official letter (or an email) to the BLM within 14 days of receipt of this letter. Please note that if you decline the invitation, this does not preclude you from participating in the NEPA decision appeals process.

The BLM will need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that describes the roles and responsibilities of the BLM and your agency. After your acceptance as a Cooperating Agency, you will receive a draft MOU for review. The BLM will need a point of contact to finalize the MOU and the name of the person who will represent your agency for the process.

Please send your letter to:

Sam Haigh
Bureau of Land Management
Ely District Office
702 North Industrial Way
Ely, Nevada 89301

Or

shaigh@blm.gov

We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to your response. If you have any questions regarding the Project or the information presented in this letter, please contact Sam Haigh at (775) 289-1882 or shaigh@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

Robbie Purdie-Williams
District Manager, Ely