



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Farmington District
Farmington Field Office
6251 College Blvd., Suite A
Farmington, New Mexico 87402
<https://www.blm.gov/new-mexico>

October 30, 2025

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Farmington Field Office appreciates your participation in the preliminary informational meeting held in May 2025 regarding potential changes to Public Land Order (PLO) No. 7923. We are now writing to formally initiate Government-to-Government consultation, as a proposed action has been identified. This letter serves as official notification of the opportunity for consultation, in accordance with the BLM's responsibilities under Handbook 1780-1, Improving and Sustaining BLM-Tribal Relations.

The BLM is initiating the process to consider a full revocation of PLO No. 7923, also known as the Chaco-area withdrawal. This process will include compliance with all applicable laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act and the Endangered Species Act. The BLM Farmington Field Office will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) that will analyze the following alternatives, which may be refined based on input received during the scoping process:

No Action Alternative (10-mile buffer withdrawal remains in effect)

PLO No. 7923 would remain in effect, keeping approximately 336,404.42 acres closed to new mineral leasing and mineral entry for 20 years, subject to valid existing rights.

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action: Revoke the Withdrawal in Full

Revoke PLO No. 7923 in full, reopening all 336,404.42 acres to mineral leasing and location and entry under the U.S. mining laws. Management of mineral resources would revert to the provisions of the 2003 Farmington Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Alternative 2 – Revoke the Withdrawal to Allow both Leasing and Mining (beyond 5-mile buffer)

Revoke PLO No. 7923 in part, reopening acres beyond a 5-mile buffer around Chaco Culture National Historical Park (CCNHP) to both mineral leasing and location and entry under the U.S. mining laws.

Background

On June 7, 2023, PLO No. 7923 withdrew approximately 336,404.42 acres of public land surrounding CCNHP from location and entry under the United States mining laws, and from leasing under the mineral leasing laws, but not from disposal of mineral materials, for 20 years, subject to valid existing rights. The area generally encompasses a 10-mile-wide perimeter around CCNHP.

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14154, Unleashing American Energy, directing the Secretary of the Interior to review agency actions that may unnecessarily restrict domestic energy and mineral development. In response, Secretary's Order 3418 was issued on February 3, 2025, instructing the BLM to evaluate existing land withdrawals.

Following this review, and consistent with section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), 43 U.S.C. 1714, the Secretary of the Interior is proposing to revoke PLO No. 7923 and reopen the subject lands to location and entry under the U.S. mining laws and to mineral leasing.

As with any decision to revoke PLO No. 7923 in whole or part, any future decision following any change to PLO No. 7923 would require compliance with applicable laws and regulations. In the absence of a withdrawal that may provide otherwise, leasing and development of any mineral resources, or development of minerals subject to location and entry under the U.S. mining laws must be consistent with the 2003 Farmington RMP, as amended.

Project Timeline

This is a priority project for the Department of the Interior. The NEPA and other required reviews will proceed on an expedited timeline. The process will include public scoping and a 14-day public comment period to ensure transparency and public involvement.

Request for Consultation

Despite the lapse in appropriations, the Farmington Field Office remains available to meet at your request. We respectfully invite [REDACTED] engage in consultation to share any concerns or recommendations regarding the proposed action.

Please contact Project Manager Sarah Scott or me to schedule a meeting, or for any questions:

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Sarah Scott
Project Manager, BLM Farmington Field Office

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We value our Government-to Government relationship and look forward to our continued dialogue on this important topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Maureen A. Joe', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Maureen A. Joe
Farmington Field Manager

Enclosure:

1. Map of current PLO 7923

Map of Current PLO 7923 (Chaco Area Withdrawal)

