

# Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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**Effective Date:** 4/25/80

**Series:** Energy and Minerals Programs

**Part 650:** Geothermal Programs

**Chapter 1:** Geothermal Environmental Advisory Panel

**Originating Office:** Bureau of Land Management

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This chapter has been given a new release number.* No text changes were made.
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## 650 DM 1

**1.1 Purpose.** The purpose of this Chapter is to set forth the policy and procedures for the Geothermal Environmental Advisory Panel (Panel) established by the February 6, 1974, Secretarial Order No. 2962. The Panel was established to advise the Supervisors of the Geological Survey and the Authorized Officers of the Bureau of Land Management and any other land managing agencies in carrying out their responsibilities related to environmental impacts resulting from exploration and development in connection with operations under leases issued under the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. Sec. 1001-1025).

**1.2 Policy.** It is the policy of the Department that the Panel shall be responsible for advising the Supervisors of the Geological Survey and the Authorized Officers of the Bureau of Land Management and any other surface managing agencies on the environmental aspects of the exploration or development plans for leases in new geological or geographical areas submitted for approval under regulations 30 CFR 270 and 271 and 43 CFR 3200. In addition, the Panel shall be available, at the request of the Supervisors or the Authorized Officers, for additional advice or consultation regarding operations under any lease which may affect the environment.

### 1.3 Procedures.

A. Organization. The Director, Geological Survey, after consultation with the Director, Bureau of Land Management, shall appoint an employee of the Department of the Interior as Chairman of the Panel with headquarters in California for the coordination of the Panel's activities. In addition, each of the following may appoint one employee to the Panel: Bureau of Land Management, Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Mines, Water and Power Resources Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, National Park Service, and the Office of the Solicitor. The heads of other Executive Departments and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency will each be authorized to appoint one employee to the Panel. Any agency, either inside or outside the Department of the Interior, authorized to appoint an employee to the Panel may provide that the person so appointed shall act as a member of the Panel only when lands subject to the jurisdiction of that agency are involved.

B. Operation

(1) Supervisor. The Supervisor for the Geological Survey shall submit to the Panel, for environmental advice, exploration or development plans for activities within the area of operations under leases in any new geological or geographical areas prior to his approval of such plans.

(2) Authorized Officer. The Authorized Officer of the surface managing agency shall submit to the Panel, for environmental advice, plans or permits for activities which are outside the area of operations, but which are directly related to operations under lease in any new geological or geographical areas, prior to his approval of such plans.

(3) Panel Chairman.

(a) The Chairman, not later than 15 days after receiving notification of a proposed action, shall inform the Supervisor or Authorized Officer whether the Panel intends to provide advice in that particular case. The Supervisor or Authorized Officer shall not delay action for more than 30 days from receipt of the plan by the Chairman, unless requested to do so by the Secretary of the Interior.

(b) The Chairman shall coordinate all requests from the Supervisor and the Authorized Officer and furnish each Panel member with plans or necessary information. He shall coordinate replies from Panel members and notify the Supervisor or Authorized Officer of specific recommendations or advice.

(4) Panel Members. Each member shall be responsible for obtaining the views of his own agency and equivalent State or local organizations on the proposed plan or action.

(5) Requests for Advice. Where violations of law, regulations, or lease terms which threaten damage to the environment occur or appear likely, the Panel shall, if requested, respond immediately to a request for advice.

C. Meetings.

(1) The Chairman shall call meetings at locations deemed by him to have the greatest importance to geothermal activity at the time. When it is desirable to do so, the Chairman shall call meetings at operational sites or at areas of particular environmental concern.

(2) The Chairman shall notify the Supervisor and the Authorized Officer of all Panel meetings and may invite them to attend such meetings to present or discuss special aspects of plans or problems submitted to the Panel.

D. Information. All reports and other documents, including maps, submitted by a geothermal resources lessee to the Supervisor or the Authorized Officer shall be made available to members of the Panel, except information and other material which is not subject to public

inspection without the consent of the lessee under 30 CFR 270.79. If the Chairman of the Panel shall request that any material excepted from disclosure to members pursuant to the foregoing sentence be made available to a member or members of the Panel because it is needed in connection with environmental evaluation, and the Supervisor having responsibility for the material shall consent, that material shall be made available to the member or members; however, any member who shall be permitted to inspect that material shall treat it as confidential and shall not make copies of it or reveal its contents to any persons not authorized to inspect it; no person not an employee of the Federal Government shall be at any time authorized to inspect such material. Any other information made available to the Panel shall, at the request of any member of the Panel, be made available to the general public.

E. Reimbursement.

(1) Each agency shall assume responsibility for expenses incurred by its member for carrying out his obligations to the Panel.

(2) The Geological Survey shall provide the funding, space, and staff support for the Chairman to carry out his responsibilities to the Panel.

F. Term. The Panel, established February 6, 1974, shall function until such time as the Secretary determines that the officers administering the geothermal resources leasing program no longer need the assistance of a Panel of specially qualified experts to advise them on the potential environmental impacts of operations in new or other areas.

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