



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 3318

Subject: Establishment of the Department of the Interior Strategic Sciences Group

Sec. 1 Purpose. This Order authorizes the establishment of the Strategic Sciences Group to: provide the Department of the Interior (Department) with science-based assessments and interdisciplinary scenarios of environmental crises affecting Departmental resources; rapidly assemble trained teams of scientists to conduct such work during environmental crises; and, provide the results of this work to the Secretary and Departmental leadership to support decision-making during crises.

Sec. 2 Background. There have been several environmental crises of national significance in the past 6 years: Hurricane Katrina (2005), severe drought in the southeastern US (2005-2007), large-scale California wildfires (2007-2008), and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (2010). All involved resources of and responses by the Department. In these and other environmental crises, the Department has had significant responsibilities to protect people and resources and engage in emergency response, recovery, and restoration efforts.

When future environmental crises involving Departmental resources occur, there will be an immediate need for scientific information and expertise. A Strategic Sciences Group will enable the Department to respond effectively. The Strategic Sciences Group will develop interdisciplinary science-based scenarios that describe possible environmental, economic, and social outcomes during a crisis, and can be delivered to Department decision-makers to inform and assist their decision-making. Science-based scenarios will ensure strategic responses, contribute to mid-term recovery, and support long-term restoration. Such assessments are valuable advisory tools to Departmental decision-makers as they manage crises at the field, region, and national levels.

Sec. 3 Authority. This Order is issued under the authority of Section 2 of Reorganization Plan No 3 of 1950 (64 Stat. 1262).

Sec. 4 Establishment of the Strategic Sciences Group.

a. Strategic Sciences Group. The Strategic Sciences Group (Group) is established in the Department. It is led by Co-Leaders from the US Geological Survey and one other bureau. The Co-Leaders report to the Science Advisor to the Secretary with respect to their responsibilities under this Order. The Co-Leaders are responsible for organizing the Group, developing necessary operating procedures and methods, managing the Group activities in support of its mission, providing results to the Science Advisor, Secretary, and Departmental leadership as requested, and coordinating with other Federal agencies and the scientific community as necessary to meet the Group's mission. The Co-Leaders are appointed by the Secretary or his designee.

(1) Bureaus and Offices. Bureaus and offices shall, in consultation with the Co-Leaders and as appropriate under existing and future programmatic and budgetary authorities, participate in the Group.

(2) Science-based Assessments. During non-crisis times, the Group will develop science-based assessments and interdisciplinary scenarios and methods, identify hazard impacts and possible interventions to reduce such impacts, and make necessary preparations for activating Crisis Science Teams.

(3) Operational Plan. Within 90 days of the date of this Order, the Group will prepare an operational plan, describing its organization, procedures, and high-priority crisis scenarios, along with all necessary preparations to activate Crisis Science Teams.

b. Strategic Sciences Council. The Co-Leaders will be advised and assisted by a Strategic Sciences Council that includes representatives from each bureau, the Office of Emergency Management, and the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance. The Council will ensure coordination among the bureaus, advise on key issues and questions to be addressed, and communicate the activities and results of the Group to bureau directors and others.

c. Crisis Science Team. During an environmental crisis affecting Departmental resources, the Secretary may direct the Group, in writing, to activate a Crisis Science Team, including scientists from government, academic institutions, non-government organizations, and the private sector, as appropriate, and provide the Department's leadership with science-based assessments and interdisciplinary scenarios as necessary and as requested. The Secretary may also direct the Group to assist other Federal, state, local, or tribal agencies, and may direct the Group to provide international assistance as necessary, subject to applicable authorities and availability of appropriations. Additional Crisis Science Teams may be activated as directed by the Secretary.

Sec. 5 Implementation. The Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management and Budget is responsible for implementing this Order, including the appropriate transfer of personnel, funds, programs, records, and property.

Sec. 6 Expiration Date. This Order is effective immediately. It will remain in effect until its provisions are converted to the Departmental Manual or until it is amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever occurs first.


Secretary of the Interior

Date: **JAN 03 2012**