The Department of the Interior protects and enables development of America’s shared natural resources to supply the energy that powers the Nation’s future. The Department’s efforts to safely and smartly manage all development—energy, timber, forage, and non-energy minerals—and make sure development complies with the highest scientific and environmental standards is critical. As a steward of lands, water, wildlife, and cultural heritage, Interior strives to ensure the sustainability of these assets to support the American economy, communities, and the well-being of the planet.

To encourage these resource stewardship and development objectives, Interior increasingly shifts from a reactive, project-by-project resource planning approach to more predictable and effective management of its lands and resources. The goal is to provide greater certainty for project developers when it comes to energy permitting and better outcomes for conservation through more effective and efficient project planning. This approach to smart development is being incorporated into all of Interior’s energy and natural resource planning and is an important part of the plan to accomplish President Obama’s energy strategy. Interior’s focus on powering America’s energy future supports an all-inclusive approach—one that responsibly balances the development of conventional and renewable resources on the Nation’s public lands.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Interior makes it a top priority to develop renewable energy resources on America’s public lands. Public lands contribute 15 percent of hydropower, three percent of windpower, 57 percent of geothermal energy, and 43 percent of installed solar energy to the Nation’s renewable energy generation capacity. The Department is working to reach 20,000 megawatts of permitted renewable energy capacity on public lands by 2020 in support of the President’s Climate Action Plan to ensure America’s continued leadership in clean energy.

Facilitating the responsible development of renewable energy resources on public lands is a cornerstone of the Administration’s energy strategy. Prior to 2009, the Bureau of Land Management approved only 2,500 megawatts of wind and geothermal energy projects, but no solar energy projects. Since 2009, BLM has approved 55 utility scale renewable energy generation and transmission projects, including 32 renewable energy resources.

**RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

**GOAL:** Increase the approved capacity for production of energy from domestic renewable resources to support a growing economy and protect our national interests while reducing our dependence on foreign oil and climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions.

**METRIC:** By September 30, 2017, increase approved capacity authorized for renewable—solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower—energy resources affecting Department of the Interior managed lands, while ensuring full environmental review, to at least 16,600 megawatts since the end of 2009.
utility scale solar facilities, 11 wind farms, and 12 geothermal plants, with associated transmission corridors and infrastructure to connect with established power grids. If fully built, these projects will provide more than 14,500 megawatts of power, or enough electricity to power 4.9 million homes, and will provide over 24,000 construction and operations jobs. In 2012, BLM successfully accomplished—three years ahead of schedule—the Energy Policy Act of 2005 goal of authorizing over 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy on public lands.

The BLM continues to work toward the President’s goal to increase permitting of new renewable electricity generation capacity on public lands to 20,000 megawatts by 2020. The BLM made great strides in facilitating and promoting the development of renewable energy on public lands over the past year. In 2015 alone, BLM approved five solar energy projects that will bring an additional 977 megawatts of power online once built, having the potential to create nearly 5,600 jobs. In addition, BLM approved six transmission projects to help unlock wind and solar resources that cannot be currently accessed due to lack of infrastructure to bring the energy produced from these sources to the grid. Among these are the SunZia transmission project in Arizona and New Mexico that will have the potential to add up to 3,000 megawatts of electrical capacity in the Southwest when built. These approvals enable BLM to achieve 75 percent of the President’s Climate Action Plan goal of approving projects that will generate 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy by 2020. Renewable energy projects authorized by BLM constitute a major contribution not only to the Nation’s energy grid, but also to the national economy. Renewable energy projects on public lands have already garnered an estimated $8.6 billion in capital investments, with the potential for an additional $28 billion for approved projects pending construction.

The BLM is also improving the way it sites and reviews renewable energy applications by moving toward a competitive process in preferred development areas, minimizing conflict, and increasing efficiency. In October 2012, the Department finalized the Western Solar Plan that identified 17 Solar Energy Zones and established a blueprint to fast track utility scale solar energy permitting within these areas. On June 1, 2015, BLM approved three projects within the Dry Lake SEZ in Nevada under this streamlined permitting process. Using the expedited review process established by the Western Solar Plan, reviews and approval of these three

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### Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

On November 10, 2015, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird announced the final environmental review of an innovative landscape scale blueprint to support renewable energy development and conservation on 10 million acres of Federal public lands managed by BLM in the California desert. The release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Phase I of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is a major step forward, and a key part of the collaborative effort to streamline renewable energy while conserving unique and valuable desert ecosystems and promoting outdoor recreation opportunities.

The blueprint is part of a larger, comprehensive effort with California, covering 22 million acres in the State’s desert region. Collectively, these lands contain the potential to generate up to 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy to advance Federal and State renewable energy and climate change goals.

Phase I of the DRECP, managed by BLM, designates Development Focus Areas with high-quality solar, wind, and geothermal energy potential access to transmission, and will allow impacts to be managed and mitigated. Applications will benefit from a streamlined permitting process with predictable survey requirements and simplified mitigation measures. Interior is considering additional financial incentives for siting projects in designated energy development zones through an ongoing rulemaking process.

The first phase also identifies National Conservation Lands, and designates Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, wildlife allocations, and National Scenic and Historic Trail management corridors to conserve biological, cultural, and other values. Special Recreation Management Areas and Extensive Recreation Management Areas are identified to recognize and promote recreational opportunities and public access. These lands will be closed to renewable energy and benefit from adaptive management in the face of climate change.
projects were completed in 10 months, less than half the time it took to review and approve projects under the previous application-by-application process. The Western Solar Plan also provides the foundation for BLM’s current rulemaking process to codify competitive solar and wind energy leasing within designated areas. The BLM’s embrace of a “smart from the start” approach to renewable energy development was most recently demonstrated in November 2015 when BLM partnered with the State of California and several other Federal and State agencies to finalize the first phase of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, which heralds a new generation of landscape scale land use planning to achieve both conservation and energy development goals. The plan will allow for timely permitting of solar projects in appropriate areas of the California desert.

In 2016 and 2017, BLM will continue to aggressively pursue the President’s goal for increasing renewable energy development in an environmentally sound manner in which renewable energy development is managed in an accelerated but responsible manner to ensure the protection of signature landscapes, wildlife habitats, and cultural resources. Collaboration through close working relationships with local communities, State regulators, private industry, and other Federal agencies is the foundation of the “smart from the start” approach.

Renewable energy development on tribal lands supports the President’s commitment to work with Indian Country leaders to promote strong, prosperous, and resilient tribal economies and communities. In 2015, the Secretary announced the award of over $5 million to 34 tribal projects to assist in developing energy and mineral resources, including $1.5 million to the Cherokee Nation for a hydroelectric project feasibility study. These grants will help strengthen self-determination and self-governance by enabling tribal Nations to evaluate and promote energy and mineral assets and develop these resources for the social and economic benefit of tribal communities. Interior will continue to support Tribes in both areas—conventional and renewable—to ensure Tribes play a crucial role in America’s energy future.

The Department’s offshore renewable energy program also is working to broaden the Nation’s energy portfolio. To date, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has issued nine commercial wind energy leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, including those offshore Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Virginia.

### POWERING OUR FUTURE
(dollars in millions)

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The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement continues to provide engineering and environmental expertise on these leases to help ensure safe and environmentally sound offshore wind development as the Department transitions the responsibility for inspection and enforcement of offshore renewable energy programs to BSEE.

In November 2015, BOEM held the Nation’s fifth competitive lease sale for renewable energy in Federal waters offshore New Jersey, from which it will issue two leases totaling over 343,000 acres for potential wind energy development. According to an analysis prepared by the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory, if fully developed, the area leased could support nearly 3,400 megawatts of commercial wind generation, enough electricity to power about 1.2 million homes. The BOEM executed the Nation’s first right-of-way grant for a renewable energy transmission system offshore Rhode Island in 2014 and the Nation’s first research lease for offshore wind in Federal waters in 2015. The BOEM is considering a number of other commercial wind energy planning areas and in November 2015, issued a call to gauge the offshore wind industry’s interest in acquiring wind leases in four areas offshore South Carolina.

The BOEM is also exploring the potential development of hydrokinetic energy from ocean currents and waves. Ocean currents contain an enormous amount of energy that can be captured and converted to a usable form. Submerged water turbines, similar to wind turbines, may be deployed on the OCS in the coming years to extract energy from ocean currents. For example, in June 2014, BOEM issued a lease for marine hydrokinetic testing offshore Florida to evaluate the use of turbines powered by ocean currents. It was the first time that BOEM issued a lease to test ocean current energy equipment in Federal waters.

Wave power devices extract energy directly from the surface motion of ocean waves. A variety of technologies are under development to capture that energy, and some of the more promising designs are undergoing demonstration testing. The BOEM is currently considering a proposal to test technology that would use wave energy offshore Oregon.

**CONVENTIONAL ENERGY**

In August 2015, BOEM conducted the next step in the implementation of the Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2012-2017 by holding Lease Sale 246 for 21.9 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico. The 2012-2017 Five-Year Program made available offshore areas with the highest resource potential and includes 75 percent of the Nation’s undiscovered, technically recoverable offshore oil and gas resources. Lease Sale 246 built on the first seven sales held under the Administration’s OCS Oil and Gas Leasing Program for 2012-2017 that offered more than 60 million acres for development, garnered $2.9 billion in bid revenues, and awarded 1,038 leases. The draft proposed program for 2017-2022, announced in January 2015, will make available areas with high potential for oil and gas, including nearly 80 percent of the undiscovered technically available resources while protecting environmental resources and areas that are simply too important to develop.

In 2015, OCS leases in Alaska, California, and the Gulf of Mexico provided 553 million barrels of oil and 1.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. The vast majority of this production came from the Gulf of Mexico. In 2015, prior to the current drop in oil prices, oil production in the Gulf of Mexico region was at its highest level since the Macondo blowout. Over 539 million barrels of oil were produced from the Gulf of Mexico in 2015, making this the third highest production year between 2005–2015. Even with the expansion and strengthening of offshore oil and gas regulations prompted by the Macondo blowout, the 10-year average production rate increased annually since 2005. From calendar year 2011 to 2014, OCS leases provided nearly two billion barrels of oil and 6.2 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, fueling economic growth and accounting for over 19 percent of the Nation’s oil production and nearly five percent of domestic natural gas production.
The BSEE will continue to support domestic energy production from the Nation’s offshore resources, while actively working to reduce risk in order to promote safe and environmentally responsible operations on the OCS.

Onshore, Secretary Jewell has been clear that as the Nation’s energy portfolio expands and diversifies, the development of conventional energy resources from BLM managed lands will continue to play a critical role in meeting the Nation’s energy needs and fueling the economy. Facilitating the safe and efficient development of these resources is one of BLM’s many responsibilities and part of the Administration’s broader energy strategy. Environmentally responsible development of these resources will improve economic conditions by increasing supplies for consumers and reducing the Nation’s reliance on oil, while also protecting Federal lands and the environment.

The BLM administers a robust and responsible oil and gas program on Federal public lands, providing access to millions of acres of public lands for oil and gas exploration and development. The BLM continues to offer leasing opportunities that meet or exceed industry demand. During 2015, BLM held 22 oil and gas lease sales, offering four million acres for lease by industry. Industry submitted bids on just 15 percent of these acres. These 22 lease sales generated $142.0 million in bonus bids and rental fees. Almost half of this revenue went directly to the States in which the development is located, supporting local economies all across the Country.

In 2017, BLM will continue to support smart, environmentally responsible oil and gas development. With increased funding provided in 2016, BLM will continue to develop and complete master leasing plans. Master leasing plans are typically prepared in areas where BLM anticipates high interest for leasing and where potential conflicts with other natural resources exist. The plans build upon Resource Management Plan decisions by providing a more focused and detailed analysis of a smaller area, including an analysis of optimal lease parcel configurations and potential development scenarios; identifying and addressing resource conflicts and associated environmental impacts; and identifying mitigation strategies and constraints. Through the MLP process, BLM analyzes and resolves these issues prior to conducting lease sales. The analysis accompanying MLPs also allows BLM to defend protests, challenges and litigation and, therefore, provide oil and gas operators increased regulatory certainty when obtaining and developing lease parcels. The MLP process supports the Department’s landscape scale mitigation strategy by enabling BLM to take a focused landscape level approach to encourage the dual objectives of smart development and conservation in resource management plan decision making related to leasing and post-lease development.

**NATIONAL PETROLEUM RESERVE-ALASKA**

A significant accomplishment in the BLM oil and gas leasing program occurred in October 2015, when BLM approved a drilling permit and a right-of-way grant for the Greater Mooses Tooth One project that will open the way for the first production of oil and gas from Federal land in the National Petroleum Reserve in northern Alaska. The permit implements a series of best management practices, lease stipulations, and mitigation measures to prepare for the potential impacts from the project, including establishment of a compensatory mitigation fund. The funds will go toward a landscape level regional mitigation strategy, currently under development through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process that includes representatives from across Alaska.

The 2017 budget request includes an increase of $2.8 million to enhance BLM’s capability to address high priority legacy wells in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. These funds will supplement mandatory funds provided in the Helium Security Act of 2013.

**MODERNIZATION OF OIL AND GAS MANAGEMENT**

In 2015 BLM made major gains in its ongoing efforts to ensure safe and responsible energy development on public lands. Years of work by BLM to modernize its out-of-date oil and gas regulations began to take shape in the form of proposed and final regulations. Many of the BLM oil and gas regulations have never been updated since adopted in the 1980s, soon after onshore leasing became BLM’s responsibility. In March 2015, BLM published its final rule on hydraulic fracturing—an oil and gas extraction technique that opened up millions of acres to potential development. The rule protects water quality for communities by addressing the...
soundness of well construction and the handling of water after it is used in the well. It also increases the public access to information about chemicals used and other aspects of the hydraulic fracturing process. Implementation of the rule is on hold, pending litigation.

Also in 2015, BLM published three proposed rules that deal with oil and gas development. These regulations establish the proper procedures for how producers should measure and account for the energy resources extracted from national public lands. Public comments on the proposed rules will be taken into account as the final rules are written in 2016. In 2016, BLM continues with modernization of the Advanced Fluid Minerals Support System, which will support greater efficiencies in oil and gas permitting and inspection activities, and with development of a proposed rule that will reduce waste of natural gas from BLM administered oil and gas operations. This will clarify when royalties are owed on natural gas used or flared at a well site. The 2017 request includes an increase of $15.2 million to support implementation of the new rules and regulations and completion of the AFMSS modernization project. The budget also includes an increase of $2.6 million for oil and gas special pay costs to improve BLM’s ability to recruit and retain high caliber oil and gas program staff who are critically important to provide effective oversight and meet workload and industry demand.

The BLM top priorities in overseeing oil and gas development on Federal lands are to ensure the operations are safe, environmentally responsible, and generate a fair return to the taxpayer. In 2015, BLM completed 100 percent of its high priority production inspections. The 2017 budget continues to request authority to charge inspection fees similar to those in place for offshore oil and gas inspections. Such authority will reduce the net cost to taxpayers of operating the oil and gas program and allow BLM to be more responsive to industry demand and increased inspection workload in the future without having to rely on increased appropriations.

Tribal Energy Initiatives

Energy is critically important to Tribes. Commercial and community scale tribal energy development is a priority for this Administration because it provides significant economic and social benefits to Tribes and individual Indians. The Administration continues to work with Tribes to assess, develop, and market conventional energy resources, while also assisting Tribes explore development of renewable energy resources, such as wind and solar energy. As a result of working closely with Tribes, annual revenues from tribal energy development grew from just under $400 million when President Obama took office in 2009 to $826.0 million in 2015.

The Indian Energy Service Center received initial funding in 2016. The Center will expedite leasing, permitting, and reporting for conventional and renewable energy on Indian lands, and provide resources to ensure development occurs safely, protects the environment, and manages risks appropriately with technical assistance to support assessment of the social and environmental impacts of energy development. The Center will include staff from BIA, BLM, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue, and Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians—all having responsibilities related to tribal energy advancement. Working with the Department of Energy’s Tribal Energy Program, the Center will provide a full suite of energy development related services to Tribes nationwide and meet the workload requirements of current demands for services. The Center will coordinate and enhance BIA’s ability to process leases, BLM’s responsibility for Applications for Permit to Drill approval and monitoring, and the ONRR responsibilities for royalty accounting. The Center will institute streamlined processes, standardized procedures, and best practices for all types of energy development at various locations regardless of which bureaus or offices are involved.

Federal Oil and Gas Reforms

The 2017 budget assumes several legislative and administrative proposals related to energy programs described more fully in the Legislative Proposals and Offsetting Collections section. In particular, the request includes a package of oil and gas program reform proposals that combine administrative reforms with legislative changes. These proposals include reforms to clarify royalty provisions, increase BLM’s discretion to set onshore royalty rates that reflect changing conditions, changes to encourage diligent development of oil and gas leases, and improvements to revenue collection processes. In total, this package of reforms is estimated to generate $1.7 billion in revenues to the Treasury over the period 2017–2026, of which the legislative components are estimated to generate $1.2 billion. Together, these reforms will promote maximum transparency in the Department’s decisions and processes—a priority for the Administration.
Remarkable progress in energy development has been achieved while also implementing critical reforms and promoting transparency in energy resource development, production, and reporting. The Department is working diligently to address the issues and challenges highlighted by the Government Accountability Office in its designation of Interior’s oil and gas management programs as “high risk,” in significant part due to concerns about whether taxpayers are receiving a fair return from the development of these public resources. Reforms include ongoing efforts to update royalty terms for new oil and gas leases, improve and simplify agency revenue collection systems and processes, and address human capital challenges within the program.

In 2014, the Department led the U.S. implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative—a global voluntary partnership to strengthen the accountability of natural resource revenue reporting and build public trust for the governance of these vital activities. In March 2014, the U.S. became the first G7 country to achieve Candidate Country status and become an EITI implementing country.

Interior achieved an important milestone in December 2015, when it raised the bar on transparency of natural resource revenue with the release of the first annual USEITI Report. This USEITI Report offers extensive information to the public in a comprehensive and accessible fashion and is another step in efforts to reform and modernize natural resource revenue management by the Department. This innovative and interactive web-based report provides clarity and transparency on the revenues generated by energy development on public lands and waters—a significant source of financial support for local communities, States, Tribes, and the Nation. The Department’s implementation of USEITI also upholds the President’s commitment to the principles of open government and the work of the global Open Government Partnership.

**Coal Management on Federal Land**

The BLM is responsible for coal leasing on approximately 570 million acres of the 700 million acres of mineral estate it manages for the American people. Although only a fraction of these acres are actually leased for coal development, they comprise an outsized portion of domestic coal production, with roughly 45 percent of the coal produced in the U.S. in recent years coming from Federal lease tracts. The BLM is working to ensure the development of coal resources is done in an environmentally sound manner and that American taxpayers receive fair market value for those resources. The BLM’s coal program manages nearly 310 active leases covering 475,692 acres.

During the last decade, Federal coal leases produced 4.56 billion tons of coal with a reported sales value of approximately $55.4 billion, generating $6.0 billion in royalty payments split between the States and the U.S. Treasury. During the same period, 46 Federal coal lease sales were held, covering 71,165 acres and containing 5.3 billion tons of recoverable coal. Approximately $4.5 billion in bonus bids were collected for these 46 leases. During 2015, the BLM coal program took in nearly $1.3 billion in royalties, rents, and bonuses. The 2017 budget for BLM includes program funding of nearly $11 million for coal management activities, allowing for fixed cost increases from the 2016 enacted level.

**Review of Coal Management Programs**

In January 2016, Interior announced it will undertake a comprehensive review to identify and evaluate potential reforms to the Federal coal program to ensure that it is properly structured to provide a fair return to taxpayers and reflect its impacts on the environment, while continuing to help meet the Nation’s energy needs. The programmatic review will examine concerns about the Federal coal program raised by the Government Accountability Office, the Interior Department’s Inspector General, Members of Congress, and the public. The review, in the form of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, will take a careful look at issues such as how, when, and where to lease; how to account for the environmental and public health impacts of Federal coal production; and how to ensure American taxpayers are earning a fair return for the use of public resources.

Consistent with the practice during two programmatic reviews of the Federal coal program during the 1970s and 1980s, Interior will institute a pause on issuing new coal leases while the review is underway. The pause does not apply to existing coal production activities. The pause will have limited, common-sense exceptions, including metallurgical coal typically used in steel production, small lease...
modifications, emergency leasing, and leases with demonstrated safety needs or insufficient reserves. In addition, pending leases that have already completed an environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act and received a final Record of Decision or Decision Order by a Federal agency under the existing regulations will be allowed to complete the final procedural steps to secure a lease or lease modification. During and after the pause, companies can continue to mine the large amount of coal reserves already under lease, estimated to be enough to sustain current levels of production from Federal land for approximately 20 years.

Interior will also undertake a series of reforms to improve transparency and administration of the Federal coal program. These reforms include establishing a publicly available database to account for the carbon emitted from fossil fuels developed on public lands, requiring BLM offices to publicly post online pending requests to lease coal or reduce royalties, and facilitating the capture of waste mine methane. Interior had already made the pending leases excepted from this process available to the public.

The Secretarial Order, which outlines the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to modernize the Federal coal program, does not apply to the coal program on Indian lands, nor does it apply to any action of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement or the ONRR. However, these actions will build on existing efforts to modernize the Federal coal program, including the ONRR work to finalize a proposed rule to ensure the valuation process for Federal and American Indian coal resources better reflects the changing energy industry while protecting taxpayers and American Indian assets.