

PUBLICATION

Interior Department Releases Final Rule Regulating Fracking on Federal and Tribal Lands

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On Friday, March 20 the Obama Administration announced a final rule from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regulating hydraulic fracturing on federal and tribal lands.

Key components of the rule, which will take effect in 90 days, include:

- requirements for the validation of well integrity and strong cement barriers between the wellbore and water zones through which the wellbore passes;
- requirements that companies publicly disclose chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing to the BLM through the website [FracFocus](#), within 30 days of completing fracturing operations;
- higher standards for interim storage of recovered waste fluids from hydraulic fracturing; and
- measures to "lower the risk of cross-well contamination with chemicals and fluids used in the fracturing operation," by requiring companies to submit more detailed information on the geology, depth, and location of preexisting wells to "afford the BLM an opportunity to better evaluate and manage unique site characteristics."

Critics argue the regulation could slow the energy boom in the United States by increasing costs in a market already hampered by falling oil prices. In fact, a few hours after the Administration announced the new rule, the Western Energy Alliance and the Independent Petroleum Association of America filed a lawsuit in federal district court in Wyoming demanding that the U.S. Department of the Interior and the BLM abandon the rules.

Stay tuned as we continue to monitor this development.