

paragraph (b)(1), which by today's action is redesignated (a)(1), BLM must replace members of committees who are serving in the elected official position, and who leave office. It may be possible in some cases for the member to continue to serve on the council in another appointed position.

Comments were received both for and against BLM payment of travel and per diem for council members. Some comments suggested that members should volunteer their time and expenses and some comments suggested that non-resident members should pay for their own travel. Other comments questioned whether advisory committee costs would escalate over time and whether councils would be in session all of the time. One comment questioned why members of resource area councils should be reimbursed, but not rangeland resource teams or technical review teams, and suggested that BLM establish technical teams and reimburse the technical team members.

FLPMA (43 U.S.C. § 1739), as amended by PRIA (43 U.S.C. 1908), requires establishment of advisory committees representative of major citizen interests concerned with resource management planning or the management of public lands. The RACs will fulfill this requirement. Section 309 of FLPMA provides that "members of advisory councils shall serve without pay, except travel and per diem will be paid each member * * *". Regulations at 43 CFR subpart 101, Federal Advisory Committee Management, also allow payment of travel expenses and per diem.

The objective of RACs established under these regulations is to make available to the Department and BLM the advice of knowledgeable citizens and public officials regarding both the formulation of operating standards and guidelines and the preparation and execution of plans and programs for the use and management of public lands, their natural and cultural resources, and the environment. The Department has concluded that to ensure broad and regular participation by members, it will continue to compensate advisory committee members for travel and per diem expenses. The Department does not anticipate that operating these committees will generate a need for substantial increases in Federal funds in the future. In any event, funding is subject to future review in the budget and appropriations process. Moreover, advisory committees are required under FLPMA and the Department has concluded the committee structure adopted in the rule will reap tangible rewards in improved land management

and increased cooperation among stakeholders.

The Department anticipates that the localized teams will be in existence for limited time periods and will focus on fairly narrow issues. As a result, the Department has concluded that members of these teams who are not also members of the parent advisory council will not be reimbursed for travel and per diem. The Department is also making the decision not to reimburse expenses of these localized teams in order to limit the expenses incurred by BLM and the Department. However, the final rule allows BLM to constitute a special function subgroup such as a technical review team and reimburse RAC members for travel expenses. In addition, the Department has the authority to purchase services in support of an advisory council, and on occasion may do so.

In accordance with the above discussion, the Department has decided to adopt a version of the proposed rule. Several minor changes are made in paragraph (d). All of these changes are intended to clarify that this section applies to all advisory committees, not just RACs. References to resource review teams and technical review teams are omitted from the final version of the rule for that reason, and for consistency with the models of RACs finalized today in §§ 1784.6-1 and 6-2. Those terms are replaced with a more general reference to "subgroups."

Section 1784.5-1 Functions and Section 1784.5-2 Meetings

These sections would have been amended by replacing the term "authorized representative" with the term "designated Federal officer." These changes would have provided consistency with the terminology of FACA.

No comments were received that pertained solely to these sections. The Department has decided to adopt this provision as proposed.

Section 1784.6-1 National Public Lands Advisory Council, Reserved Sections 1784.6-2 and 1784.6-3, Section 1784.6-4 District Advisory Councils, and Section 1784.6-5 Grazing Advisory Boards

References to the National Public Lands Advisory Council, district advisory councils and grazing advisory boards would have been removed in their entirety and replaced with three new sections that would have established multiple resource advisory councils and associated input teams. Sections 1784.6-4 and 1784.6-5 would have been removed. Reserved sections

1784.6-2 and 1784.6-3 would have been replaced by new sections.

No comments were received on the proposals relating to §§ 1784.6-2 and 6-3. A number of comments were received concerning §§ 1784.6-4 and 6-5. Comments directed to § 1784.6-1 have been addressed below in the discussion of the new provisions in that section.

Many commenters stated that the grazing advisory boards' members had both knowledge of and an interest in the land. Some commenters who supported establishment of the RACs stated that the grazing advisory boards should also be retained; others stated that the grazing advisory boards should be abolished.

Grazing advisory boards have served a useful purpose in providing the Department with valuable input from permittees regarding grazing issues. However, the statutory provision in FLPMA, section 403, establishing grazing advisory boards expired by its own terms on December 31, 1985. Since then, the boards have been authorized only by Secretarial order. For several reasons, the Department has concluded that it will proceed with its proposal to abolish the boards and to rely on one general form of advisory committee, the RACs. While grazing advisory boards have been useful, the Department believes that more collaborative public rangeland management requires a broader scope of interests advising BLM. The function of grazing advisory boards, as defined by FLPMA, was limited to making recommendations to management concerning the development of AMPs and the utilization of range betterment funds. While grazing advisory boards may have included some individuals not involved in grazing, this was not uniformly the case. RACs will address a full range of resource management issues, including AMPs and planning for the expenditure of range betterment funds and will broaden public involvement in the process.

All groups that provide advice to the Federal government are subject to the requirements of FACA, unless specifically excluded by statute. FACA specifies a series of requirements for committees and other bodies advising the Federal government, including that they be balanced in terms of representation, have notices of meetings published in the **Federal Register** and be open to the public, keep various types of records, and implement other procedural safeguards that will assure public involvement in resource management issues. The Department believes it is important that management of the public rangelands