

**Forest Service, USDA**

**§ 251.92**

(c) To request a stay of decision, an appellant or intervenor must—

(1) File a written request with the Reviewing Officer;

(2) Simultaneously send a copy of the stay request to any other appellant(s), to intervenor(s), and to the Deciding Officer.

(3) Provide a written justification of the need for a stay, which at a minimum includes the following:

(i) A description of the specific project(s), activity(ies), or action(s) to be stopped.

(ii) Specific reasons why the stay should be granted in sufficient detail to permit the Reviewing Officer to evaluate and rule upon the stay request, including at a minimum:

(A) The specific adverse effect(s) upon the requester;

(B) Harmful site-specific impacts or effects on resources in the area affected by the activity(ies) to be stopped, and

(C) How the cited effects and impacts would prevent a meaningful decision on the merits.

(d) A Deciding Officer and other parties to an appeal may provide the Reviewing Officer with a written response to a stay request. A copy of any response must be sent to all parties to the appeal.

(e) *Timeframe.* The Reviewing Officer must rule on a stay request no later than 10 calendar days from receipt.

(f) *Criteria to consider.* In deciding a stay request, a Reviewing Officer shall consider:

(1) Information provided by the requester pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section including the validity of any claim of adverse effect on the requester;

(2) The effect that granting a stay would have on preserving a meaningful appeal on the merits;

(3) Any information provided by the Deciding Officer or other party to the appeal in response to the stay request; and

(4) Any other factors the Reviewing Officer considers relevant to the decision.

(g) *Notice of decision on a stay request.* A Reviewing Officer must issue a written decision on a stay request.

(1) If a stay is granted, the stay shall specify the specific activities to be stopped, duration of the stay, and reasons for granting the stay.

(2) If a stay is denied in whole or in part, the decision shall specify the reasons for the denial.

(3) A copy of a decision on a stay request shall be sent to all parties to the appeal.

(h) *Duration.* A stay shall remain in effect for the 15-day period for determining discretionary review (§251.100), unless changed by the Reviewing Officer in accordance with paragraph (i) of this section.

(i) *Change in a stay.* A Reviewing Officer may change a stay decision in accordance with any terms established in the stay decision itself or at any time during pendency of an appeal that circumstances support a change of stay. In making any changes to a stay decision, the Reviewing Officer must issue a written notice to all parties to the appeal explaining the reason for making the changes and setting forth any terms or conditions that apply to the change.

(j) *Petitions to change a stay.* An appellant or intervenor may petition a Reviewing Officer to change or lift a stay at any time during the pendency of an appeal. Such petitions must be in writing, must explain how circumstances have changed since the stay was imposed, and must state why the change in the stay is being requested. The petitioner must send a copy of the petition to all parties to the appeal.

(k) *Appeal of stay decision or changes in stay.* A Reviewing Officer's decision to grant, deny, lift, or otherwise change a stay is not subject to further appeal and review, except when the first-level Reviewing Officer was the Forest Supervisor. In this instance, the Regional Forester has discretion to review.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34510, Aug. 21, 1989; 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]

**§ 251.92 Dismissal.**

(a) The Reviewing Officer shall dismiss an appeal and close the record without a decision on the merits when:

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(1) The appellant is not eligible to appeal a decision under this subpart.

(2) Appellant's notice of appeal is not filed within the required time period, or the notice of appeal fails to meet the minimum requirements of § 251.90 of this subpart to such an extent that the Reviewing Officer lacks adequate information on which to base a decision.

(3) In cases where there is only one appellant, the appellant withdraws the appeal.

(4) The requested relief cannot be granted under existing law, fact, or regulation.

(5) The decision is excluded from appeal under this subpart (§ 251.83).

(6) The Deciding Officer has withdrawn the decision under appeal.

(7) A request for review of the same decision has been filed by the same person under part 217 of this chapter.

(8) A mediated agreement is reached (§ 251.103).

(b) The Reviewing Officer shall give written notice of dismissal that includes an explanation of why the appeal is dismissed.

(c) A Reviewing Officer's dismissal decision is subject to discretionary review at the next administrative level as provided for in § 251.87(d), except when a dismissal decision results from withdrawal of an appeal by an appellant, withdrawal of the initial decision by the Deciding Officer, or a mediated resolution of the dispute.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 55 FR 7896, Mar. 6, 1990; 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]

### § 251.93 Resolution of issues.

(a) Authorized Forest Service officers shall, to the extent practicable and consistent with the public interest, consult and meet in person, or by phone, with holders of written instruments prior to issuing written decisions related to administration of a written authorization. The purpose of such meetings is to discuss any issues or concerns related to the authorized use and to reach a common understanding and agreement where possible prior to issuance of a written decision.

(b) When decisions are appealed, the Deciding Officer may discuss the appeal with the appellant(s) and intervenor(s) together or separately to nar-

row issues, agree on facts, and explore opportunities to resolve the issues by means other than review and decision on the appeal, including mediation pursuant to § 251.103. At the request of the Deciding Officer, the Reviewing Officer may extend the time period to allow for meaningful negotiations, except for appeals under review at the discretionary level. In the event of mediation of a grazing dispute under § 251.103, the Reviewing Officer may extend the time for mediation only as provided in § 251.103.

(c) The Deciding Officer has the authority to withdraw a decision, in whole or in part, during the appeal. Where a Deciding Officer decides to withdraw a decision, all parties to the appeal and the Reviewing Officer must receive written notice.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 54 FR 34510, Aug. 21, 1989; 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]

### § 251.94 Responsive statement.

(a) *Content.* A responsive statement contains the Deciding Officer's response to the specific facts or issues of law or regulation and the requested relief set forth by the appellant in the notice of appeal.

(b) *Timeframe.* Unless the Reviewing Officer has granted an extension or dismissed the appeal, or unless mediation has been requested under this subpart, the Deciding Officer shall prepare a responsive statement and send it to the Reviewing Officer and all parties to the appeal within 30 days of receipt of the notice of appeal. Where mediation occurs but fails to resolve the issues, the Deciding Officer shall prepare a responsive statement and send it to the Reviewing Officer and all parties to the appeal within 30 days of the reinstatement of the appeal timeframes (§ 251.103(c)).

(c) *Replies.* Within 20 days of the post-marked date of the responsive statement, the appellant(s) and any intervenor(s) may file a written reply to the responsive statement with the Reviewing Officer. Appellants and intervenors must send a copy of any reply to a responsive statement to all parties to the appeal, including the Deciding Officer.

[54 FR 3362, Jan. 23, 1989, as amended at 64 FR 37846, July 14, 1999]