

brines, associated gases, and steam, in whatever form, found below the surface of the earth[,].

(2) [but excluding] “GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES” DO NOT INCLUDE oil, hydrocarbon gas, and other hydrocarbon substances.

8-8A-02.

(b) In exploring and developing geothermal resources maximum possible consideration shall be afforded to:

(1) [avoiding] AVOIDING waste and unreasonable use of natural resources;[and]

(2) [to protecting] PROTECTING the environment[,]; and

(3) [to optimizing] OPTIMIZING the productive use of the resource.

8-8A-03.

(d) The Department may use any funds made available for the purpose of exploring, analyzing, [developing] DEVELOPING, and using geothermal resources.

(f) The Department shall [promulgate rules and] ADOPT regulations necessary to assure safe and efficient undertaking of any operation to bore, core, dig, or construct a well. These [rules and] regulations may allow for reinjection if there is adequate determination that [such] THE reinjection would maintain the integrity of the supply.

(g) The Department may [promulgate rules and] ADOPT regulations necessary to implement this subtitle.

8-8A-04.

(c) The Department may approve an application if [it] THE DEPARTMENT determines that:

(1) [the] THE applicant is qualified to conduct exploratory work[,];

(2) [that the] THE applicant will comply with all applicable laws[,]; and

(3) [that the] THE applicant’s work program provides adequate protection for the natural resources of the State.

(d) The permit required by this section shall be in lieu of any permit required by [Title 8, Subtitle 8 of this article] SUBTITLE 8 OF THIS TITLE or Title 9, Subtitle 13 of the Environment Article.

8-8A-05.

(a) Every person [is required to] SHALL obtain a permit from the Department to appropriate or use[,] or to construct any well, plant, building, or structure which may appropriate or use geothermal resources of the State. The permit is obtained upon written application to the Department. The applicant for the permit must have the legal right to use the surface and give assurance of this right.