



The Mountain Pact

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Office of Natural Resources Revenue
Attention: RPC
1849 C Street NW, MS 5134
Washington, DC 20240

Secretary Ryan Zinke
cc: Mr. Chris Mentasti, Office of Natural Resources Revenue

September 7, 2018

Dear Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke,

The Mountain Pact as well as the below listed local elected officials represent Americans who understand the importance of healthy public lands to the economic prosperity and cultural vitality of our communities.

The Department of the Interior is legally obligated to manage public lands under a multiple use mandate that ensures a balance of uses between recreation, energy development, conservation, and cultural traditions. However, current management practices have led to large swaths of national public lands being tied up by oil and gas companies, thus limiting the use of these lands by American taxpayers.

Public lands management and proper valuation of resources produced on these lands are crucial for mountain communities. The proposals being reviewed by the Royalty Policy Committee do not adequately address the issues of dominant oil and gas leasing practices on public lands. Our public lands are meant to be open to all Americans, not just the oil and gas industry, and they must be managed in a way that supports multiple uses while ensuring taxpayers are getting a fair share from responsible energy development.

By increasing royalty rates, minimum lease bids, and rental rates, taxpayers will receive fairer returns on the development of their natural resources. Additionally, leases must be managed in a way that doesn't allow for companies to speculate on leases that have a low likelihood of being developed, thereby detracting from other beneficial uses like wildlife conservation and

recreation on public lands. Overall, we need a sweeping review of the oil and gas leasing process that:

1. Increases royalty rates to match market prices and rates used by western states;
2. Increases minimum lease bids to discourage speculation and raise revenue;
3. Increases rental rates to encourage development, discourage speculation and increase revenue; and
4. Prioritizes leasing in areas that will generate the most revenues for taxpayers and will not impair other revenue-generating activities like outdoor recreation.

By following these guidelines, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) can ensure management of our public lands in the best interests of mountain communities. Multiple use includes a wide variety of activities, from industrial development to wilderness preservation. Some areas are appropriate for oil and gas drilling, others should be left alone for the protection of wildlife habitat and natural ecosystem processes. Multiple use does not mean every use on every acre.

Please continue to follow common sense environmental safeguards, and respect voices from mountain communities that rely on healthy, well-managed public lands for economic stability, outdoor recreation, and cultural vitality.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna Peterson, Executive Director, The Mountain Pact
Kalen Jones, Moab City Council Member, Moab Utah
Mayor Pro Tem Margaret Ann Mullins, Aspen City Council, Aspen, Colorado
Michael Lilliquist, Bellingham City Councilor, Bellingham, Washington
Mayor Pro Tem Hunter Mortensen, Frisco Town Council, Frisco, Colorado