On Friday, November 23, the day after Thanksgiving which is one of the busiest shopping days of the year, the Trump Administration released two reports detailing climate change impacts in the United States. Although the timing of the release has been called into question, the message is clear; government scientists are ringing the alarm bell on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts.

The first report is the long-awaited National Climate Assessment says that we are already experiencing the impacts from climate change and that they are going to get worse. The second, a United States Geological Survey (USGS) report, found that between 2005 and 2014, approximately one quarter of all United States carbon dioxide emissions came from coal, oil, and gas produced on federal lands.

National Climate Assessment
The 2018 National Climate Assessment was produced by 13 federal departments and agencies, and describes how climate change impacts are worsening, and that we must take immediate action. The urgency in this report is at odds with the Trump Administration's emphasis on rolling back environmental regulations. In fact, both President Trump and EPA chief Andrew Wheeler have expressed concern regarding the climate change report saying that they 'don't believe it.'
In 2016, then President Obama commissioned the USGS to create a report that detailed carbon dioxide emissions from energy produced on public lands. The report found that between 2005 and 2014 an average of 23.7 percent of all United States carbon dioxide emissions came from federal lands, with 13 percent being directly attributed to coal. In addition, 7.3 percent of total U.S. methane emissions come from public lands. The reported emissions include those generated by drilling, mining, transporting, and refining before being burned. Emissions were found to have decreased between 2005 and 2014, likely due to decreased production on public lands. However, with this administration's increased focus on oil and gas production from public lands, it is likely emissions have increased again.

**Impacts to Mountain Communities**

Since 2016, the Trump Administration has worked tirelessly to rollback many Obama era environmental protections. President Trump and his administration have pulled out of the Paris Climate Accord, are attempting to freeze fuel efficiency standards, have repealed the commonsense 2016 Methane Waste Prevention Rule, and have put major emphasis on removing public input from the oil and gas leasing process on public lands. This 'energy dominance' agenda has put the American people at risk, as has been shown in both recent climate reports. In the western U.S. we are already experiencing decreased snowpack, increased droughts, as well as lengthening and intensifying fire seasons, all of which will get even worse according to this report – especially if we do not take immediate and substantial actions.

The USGS found that in 2014, carbon dioxide emissions from fuels produced on public lands were the highest in Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Louisiana, and the offshore gulf, with Wyoming having 57% of emissions. Our communities are already experiencing some of the worst economic and cultural impacts from climate change due to our proximity to and reliance on public lands, ski areas, and forests. To reduce emissions and thus impacts from climate change, the Trump Administration should curb fossil fuel development on public lands to minimize threats to clean air, water, ecological diversity, wildlife, and wild places that make our communities so special.
What You Can Do

In order to comply with a court order issued in Idaho earlier this year, which faulted BLM for prioritizing oil and gas leasing over its duty to provide for meaningful public engagement, the BLM deferred some December lease sales totaling over 1.5 million acres of public lands within sage-grouse and other critical wildlife habitat in Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. However, shortly after deferring this acreage, the BLM swiftly placed 91 percent of those lands back on the chopping block for February and March 2019 sales. There are many parcels in these sales that have conflicts with wildlife, recreation, agriculture, and clean air and water. It is important that the BLM hear from individuals who will be impacted by these lease sales so that the BLM manages our public lands with their legally required multiple use mandate, not only focusing on energy extraction. Below is a list of public comment period deadlines with information on how to comment.

- **Montana**: 322 parcels have been nominated and the comment deadline ends **December 21, 2018**. You can submit by mail or electronically.
- **Utah**: 156 parcels totaling 217,519 acres have been nominated and the comment deadline ends **December 17, 2018 at 4:30pm**. Comments must be submitted electronically.
- **Colorado**: 26 parcels totaling 14,051.74 acres have been nominated and the comment deadline ends **December 14, 2018 at 4pm**. Comments must be submitted electronically.
- **Wyoming**: Approximately 778,312 acres have been nominated and the comment deadline ends **December 13, 2018**. Comments must be submitted electronically.
- **Nevada**: Approximately 393, 607 acres have been nominated. More information to come on the BLM website regarding comment.

As the comment periods for the February and March 2019 sales unfold, it is imperative the BLM does not merely check the public participation box and continue business as usual. The BLM must actually listen and base its decisions on the perspectives and information offered by the public. Please contact us at info@themountainpact.org if you have any questions or would like help drafting a comment letter.