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Trump Administration's Bailout of Oil and Gas Industry Takes Money Away From Taxpayers

Durango, CO - In response to the Trump Administration's [proposed rule to amend the Office of Natural Resources Revenues \(ONRR\)](#) regulations, The Mountain Pact Executive Director, Anna Peterson, gave the following statement:

"The proposed rule change will provide loopholes for the oil and gas industry to sidestep royalty payments due to taxpayers who own the federal public lands oil and gas companies lease. The Trump administration's Department of Interior and the Trump administration are giving the beleaguered industry free rein to despoil our public lands at almost no cost. The courts have rejected prior efforts to reduce royalty payments.

With David Bernhardt as Secretary of the Interior and Acting Director William Perry Pendley at the helm of the Bureau of Land Management, both with well-documented conflicts of interest because of their prior associations with the oil and gas industry, we see these decisions as a reflection of their misguided emphasis on the administration's 'energy dominance' agenda. They are using the pandemic as a way to justify special treatment for the declining oil and gas industry and to pollute without accountability.

Healthy public lands are crucial to the economic and cultural vitality of our Western communities, including those that are adjacent to our national parks. They are the foundation for a unique way of life and draw visitors from all over the world who support our growing and critically important outdoor recreation economies. The administration's bailout of the oil and gas industry will make it even more difficult to fund much-needed school, hospital, and other critical infrastructure projects.

The administration's efforts to weaken environmental regulations will result in increased levels of pollution that will cause our communities, some of whom already suffer from compromised air and water quality from past oil and gas drilling operations, to be more vulnerable to respiratory disease from airborne pollutants.

During this public health crisis, rather than boosting the oil and gas industry, which was already struggling before the pandemic, with a taxpayer funded bailout and reduced regulation, the administration should use public money to benefit communities, which rely on healthy public lands for vibrant economies. Relief should be focused on helping our small towns and cities navigate this unprecedented public health crisis - not the failing oil and gas industry."

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in over 50 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.