

PITKIN
COUNTY



The Mountain Pact

Colorado Bureau of Land Management State Director
U.S. Department of the Interior
BLM Upper Colorado River District
Attn: Supplemental EIS
2518 H Road, Grand Junction, CO 81506

CC: Senator Michael Bennet, Senator John Hickenlooper, Representative Joe Neguse

Dear Acting Director Connolly,

The below listed local elected officials, who represent communities within the Colorado River Valley Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Field Office, urge you to reduce federal oil and gas leasing on BLM lands within our communities; as well as to take steps to administratively protect lands with wilderness characteristics and areas of environmental concern through this and future planning processes. Doing so will protect some of our communities' critical water resources, Indigenous cultural sites, important wildlife habitat, and treasured recreation areas.

Many of the BLM lands located in our region are favorites for visitors and residents alike for camping, fishing, mountain biking, and hiking. Yet, many of these areas were left open to oil and gas leasing in the 2015 Resource Management Plan.

While you are completing a more thorough analysis of the impacts of federal oil and gas development on our climate and communities, we urge you to consider that fossil fuel extraction on public lands generates 25 percent of the United States' climate change causing emissions.

Our communities are now facing year-long wildfire seasons, drought, flooding, and extreme weather. By protecting our public lands and reducing oil and gas leasing, we can increase conservation to mitigate the incredibly expensive and devastating climate crisis that is significantly impacting our communities; local agriculture; outdoor recreation and tourism economies; public health and well-being.

Our nation's protected public lands are tremendous assets to our Western communities. They play a critical role in our way of life. They help make the communities where we live what they are while contributing to a healthier and better tomorrow for future generations.

The Bureau of Land Management has an opportunity to embrace the America the Beautiful initiative and help conserve and restore more of our nation's lands and waters for residents, wildlife, and future generations. Limiting oil and gas development on BLM lands, identifying and protecting additional Lands with Wilderness Characteristics as well as increasing the designations of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) is essential to providing continued opportunities for outdoor recreation, equitable access to nature, and ultimately safeguarding the climate.

Some specific lands within our communities that would benefit from greater protections, among others, by the BLM include:

Recreation Management Areas:

- Red Hill Special Recreation Management Area
- The Crown Special Recreation Management Area

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:

- Castle Peak
- Deep Creek
- Hack Lake
- Thompson Creek

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern:

- Bull Gulch
- Grand Hogback

As the largest land manager in the nation, the Bureau of Land Management must play a leading role in protecting our public lands for the future. 75 percent of Coloradans “think that oil and gas development on national public lands should be stopped or strictly limited, as opposed to expanded.

We must take action now to avoid the increasing and extremely costly catastrophic climate impacts that are harming our communities. We look forward to working with you and your forward-looking analysis that will ensure greater protections for BLM lands and waters in and near our communities.

Sincerely,

- Mayor Torre, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Mayor Pro Tem Ward Hauenstein, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Council Member John Doyle, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Council Member Rachel Richards, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Council Member Skippy Mesirow, City of Aspen, Colorado
- Council Member David Knight, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member Elyse Hottel, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Council Member Glenn Drummond, Town of Basalt, Colorado
- Mayor Ben Bohmfalk, Town of Carbondale, Colorado
- County Commissioner Jeanne McQueeney, Eagle County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Matt Scherr, Eagle County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry, Eagle County, Colorado
- Mayor Jonathan Godes, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- Mayor Pro-Tem Charlie Willman, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- Councilor Shelley Kaup, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- Councilor Paula Stepp, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- Councilor Ingrid Wussow, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- Councilor Tony Hershey, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- Councilor Marco Dehm, City of Glenwood Springs, Colorado
- County Commissioner Patti Clapper, Pitkin County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Greg Poschman, Pitkin County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Steve Child, Pitkin County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Franci Jacober, Pitkin County, Colorado
- County Commissioner Kelly McNicholas Kury, Pitkin County, Colorado