

July 30, 2014

Jess Juen, Director
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
New Mexico State Office,
301 Dinosaur Trail
PO Box 27115
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502

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STATE OFFICE
SANTA FE, NM, MEXICO

Dear Director Juen:

My name is Thomas Fortson and my address is 209-B Highway 110, El Rito, NM 87530. My wife and I are longtime NM residents and landowners. We grow alfalfa on our land. I am writing to protest the inclusion of the 13 parcels in the Santa Fe National Forest that are up for lease sale in the October 22, 2014 Oil and Gas Lease Sale/Farmington Field Office. These parcels are: NM-201410-001, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 010, 011, 012, 013, 014, and 015. I am urging that these remaining parcels, east of the Continental Divide, be deferred for the same reasons that the other 22 parcels were deferred, as they are in the same geologic and geographic location.

I am urging the deferment of these parcels for the following critical reasons:

1. **WATER** is life and it is an ever-diminishing resource in our region. Millions of gallons of water are required for each proposed well and the oil and gas companies will want to use the water here. This will greatly deplete local water resources for farmers and residents. The chemicals used in fracking will also poison the local water supply and the water supply of millions of New Mexicans downstream.
2. **CHEMICALS** which are put into the wells are unregulated. The oil and gas companies do not have to report the chemicals they use and in 2011 the House of Representatives reported that of 2500 fracking products, at least 650 contain known carcinogens. In 2012 there was a record number of accidental spills self-reported by companies: 700. In 2011 and 2012 thirty reported spills impacting a waterway or groundwater supply. Millions of gallons of waste water will be produced and there is no reference in the BLM Assessment as to how it will be taken care of. Waste water pits are often used to dispose of the toxic sludge, with the chemicals slowly evaporating into the air and/or sitting in the open for years.
3. Injection wells are often used to dispose of this wastewater. They are known to cause **SEISMIC** activity. Several fault lines are known to exist near the Abiquiu Lake Reservoir. Not only is this lake and source of water but it is perched above the highly populated Chama River Valley.
4. **INCREASED NOISE POLLUTION AND TRAFFIC AND OVERSTRESSED INFRASTRUCTURES:** Data already exists that traffic accidents and fatalities rise dramatically in areas where oil and gas companies are operating wells. Thousands of big rig trucks will be running on our narrow highways and dirt roads 24/7. In

addition, the generators and bright lights will be constant. Our priceless quiet and the uninterrupted dark skies of northern New Mexico will be destroyed.

5. **AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES:** Fracking commonly involves flaring in which huge amounts of hydrocarbons are released directly into the atmosphere. Flaring also poses extreme fire danger to the Santa Fe National Forest. A three to twelve mile radius has been identified as dangerous to human and animal health. The animal and plant life of our forests already struggles against the encroachments of human activity in their habitat. Where do they have to go and how will they survive when oil and gas companies' continued explorations endanger wildlife existence?

6. There is no reason to lease these parcels: quoting from the EA: "An assumption is that the No Action Alternative (no lease option) would not affect current domestic production of oil and gas." **IN OTHER WORDS, THERE IS NOT ENOUGH OIL AND GAS HERE TO BE OF ANY REAL COMMERCIAL VALUE!** It goes on, "If the BLM were to forego leasing and potential development of the proposed parcels, the assumption is that the public's demand for the resource would not be expected to change. Instead, the mineral resource foregone would be replaced in the short- and long-term by other sources that may include a combination of imports, using alternative energy sources (e.g. wind, solar, and other domestic production. This offset in supply would result in a no net gain for oil and gas domestic production."

I AM ASTOUNDED that any consideration is being given to leasing these parcels. The leasing would entail huge environmental and human costs, offer no significant commercial benefit, and other sources exist that will meet public need for energy resource.

Please defer the remaining thirteen parcels in this Lease Sale. The BLM Farmington Field Office as sale agent has the authority to defer these parcels. These parcels carry the same risks to the Rio Chama Watershed east of the Continental Divide as neighboring parcels that have been deferred. They present the same issues of toxic pollution of our natural environment, excessive waste of water, endangerment of human, forest and wildlife, overtaxing existing infrastructures and risk of seismic activity as the other deferred parcels. A finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the October 22, 2014 Oil and Gas Lease Sale is not adequately supported by the Environmental Assessment as it now stands.

Most sincerely,



Thomas Fortson
209-B Highway 110
El Rito, NM 87530
thomfortson@yahoo.com