

Jesse Juen
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
New Mexico State Office
PO Box 27115
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502

August 14, 2014

Dear Director Juen,

My name is Melinda Hess and I am writing to protest the proposed sales of parcels **NM-201410- 001, 004 thru 015** that will be offered up for lease in the BLM Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale, October 22, 2014.

I have been a resident of Abiquiu for 15 years, living here as an artist and filmmaker. What drew me here was not only the extraordinary beauty of the land, but the abundance of natural resources that are abound in Northern New Mexico. Natural resources like clean air and water. As a Northern New Mexico resident I am extremely concerned with the integrity of our watershed and all our natural resources. We are fortunate to live and work in a location steeped in human and natural history, beauty and natural resources.

From all the research I have done I am completely opposed to opening up the lower Chama River Valley to the dangerous and irresponsible practices of Hydraulic Fracturing.

The following are some of the reasons for my 100% opposition of gas exploration and fracking in the lower Chama River Valley.

- Water is our most precious resource- we ALL need it for life. It is more valuable than oil or gas will ever be. We need to insure that everyone has clean, safe water for our lives. We are also in a severe drought. From what I understand, the 3-5 million gallons of water needed to fracture a single well endanger our precious supply of save water in a drought. The water used for fracking will be permanently contaminated and removed from the hydrologic cycle. The Morrison Formation is a vital aquifer in the Rio Chama Watershed. The Rio Chama flows to the Rio Grande and together they deliver over half of the water for the entire state. Contamination of the Morrison Formation aquifer would have disastrous effects for us all.
- It has been shown that Hydraulic Fracturing degrades bedrock and has been scientifically linked to dramatic increases in earthquakes. Numerous faults have been detected under the Abiquiu Reservoir. This has not been addressed by the BLM Environmental Assessment (EA).
- The geology east of the Continental Divide is distinct from the San Juan basin. BLM has not completed the required studies (RPM) to drill in the Mancos shale. There are much greater contamination risks associated with drilling in this very shallow and unique geology.
- BLM's own mission statement- "To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations" is **NOT** being served by the practice of fracking- inserting toxic

chemicals deep within our natural land formations. Oil and gas companies are not legally required to disclose the chemicals they inject into wells. In 2011 the House of Representatives reported that of 2,500 hydraulic fracturing products, 650 contain known carcinogens. Spills in New Mexico's oil and gas fields set records in 2012 with nearly 700 self-reported accidents. At least thirty reported spills during 2011 and 2012 impacted a waterway or groundwater supply.

- We live in a magnificent environment, free from pollution both to the air and water. Flaring which occurs in fracking releases huge amounts of hydrocarbons into the atmosphere. Given the proximity to the Santa Fe National Forest, flaring also increases our risk of fire danger in a drought stricken region. Additionally, another risk to the environment are the waste- water pits, a fracking by product, which left open to the air contain toxic waste-water evaporating into our environment.
- My concern for the environment extends to all life here, including wildlife whose migratory patterns could be disrupted with the building of the fracking infrastructure.
- One of the reasons that people choose to live in Northern New Mexico, and tourists are inspired to visit here, is the beauty of our natural landscapes, big open skies, open space and dark skies. All of these assets which are so important to our economy are endangered by fracking- from light pollution and noise emitted from the fracking pads, to the unsightly rigs and flaring that interrupts the landscapes well known throughout the world.
- Finally, please note that the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Farmington Oil and Gas Lease October 2014 is NOT adequately supported by the Environmental Assessment (EA).

We in New Mexico take great pride in the land of enchantment. To me this means not only the beauty of place but the rich culture, history and peoples that have lived here for centuries. Hydraulic Fracturing endangers ALL aspects of our lives- the past, as in places like Chaco Canyon, our present and future for other generations to come. **Please defer the 13 parcels up for lease in the October 22, 2014 BLM Lease Sale.**

Thank you for considering my comments on this critical issue. Please continue to manage our lands and resources for the well being of all. We appreciate it.



Melinda Hess
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