

Post Office Box 934

Abiquiu, NM 87510

August 3, 2014

RECEIVED
B.L.M. - MAIL ROOM
2014 AUG - 5 PM 2: 02
STATE OFFICE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

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

Dear Mr. Juen,

I am John Graham and reside at 215 State Road, Abiquiu, NM 87510. I have lived here for two years. My first encounter with northern New Mexico was in the early 1970's when I spent three summers in Santa Fe for professional work. My return to this land was a result of a deep attachment formed those 40 years ago.

I am writing to you to protest the proposed leasing of parcels: **NM-201410-001, 004 thru 015** which I understand to be within the Forest Service boundaries.

I have always been impressed with the human dimensions of the tangle of fundamental claims for use of land out here, most likely a larger complex of concerns than anywhere else in the U.S.

I have recently been reading about the history of the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service in the Santa Fe and Carson Forests to equitably serve these competing claims for use of its lands. As the Service has moved from a focus on enabling the harvesting of resources on its land to concerns of meeting demands by local Hispanic farming and Native American cultures and the various and often competing environmental movements, it is clear that, at minimum, the Service has been seriously trying to evolve its thinking and planning while attempting to allow maximum use for all concerned.

It is also clear that the Service has been primarily concerned with the many claims for what is on the surface of its Land.

My concern with these proposed leases of course is about what is underground in the forests and how the possibility of fracking in the complex geological and hydrological structure of the Rio Arriba Frontier will negatively, if not disastrously affect the watershed of the Chama-Rio Grande basin.

I am not a geologist nor a hydrologist so I may not offer deeply informed observations about the issues at stake. However, my view of the physical and geological maps of the area east of the Divide in the Rio Arriba Frontier Region make it clear that all aspects of drilling will affect our entire watershed, and by extension, the down-river flow of the Chama-Rio Grande system. **Have the BLM or Forest Service studies been made in a depth that can verify that there is no danger for such a large watershed that is used so fundamentally by so large a population?**

It is also clear that the Mancos Shale on this side of the divide is near the surface, unlike its position in the San Juan Basin, which directly refutes the claim of the fracking industry that shale deposits are way below the levels of ground water and are thus safe to frack. **Are the studies of the BLM or Forest Service able to verify the safety of drilling in shale so near the surface in so vast a watershed?**

Our underground here is infamous for the variety of its structures: the water from our 300 ft. well has double the EPA safe level standard for uranium. Our closest neighbor, approximately an 1/8th of a mile away, has only normal amounts and just across SR 554 it is said that the total mineral content is more consistent and in better balance. **Has the BLM or Forest Service conducted in depth seismic studies of this watershed? Could fracking above the Chama seismically affect the Abiquiu Dam?**

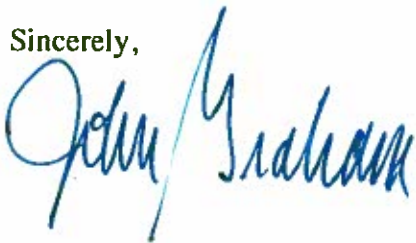
The damage to the land from the construction of fracking wells is so well documented it need not be listed here, except to note that that surface destruction will affect an environment that we all witness as subject to natural catastrophies and thus tax its abilities to withstand erosion, desiccation, and loss of plant and animal life.

The focus on land use has always been based on the realities of economics. Even environmental issues are most often discussed in terms of managing resources for best-future-use or acknowledging the economic benefits of wilderness or tourist uses. But how do we factor into our uses of it what land offers aesthetically, spiritually? Usually around the edges of discussions, if at all. Economic issues like how grazing rights affect small ranchers, or the dependency of county government, and federal land services, on payments by oil and gas are easily top priorities for the poor, the bureaucratic or the wealthy. But these concerns have to be topped by the life and death issues of rendering an entire watershed toxic, or a huge space of land subject to seismic shifts.

The Pueblo people are connected spiritually to their land. Small Hispanic cattle ranchers that I know express their love for the land while complaining about grazing rights. Backpackers and tourists, while contributing to local economies, are basically here for what the land offers aesthetically, spiritually. It cannot be ignored that this land speaks directly, deeply and personally to all of us. To be forced, for the sake of economy, to subject our landscape to what has been allowed in the San Juan Basin would be to pile yet another life and death issue upon it.

I would look forward to a reply by you or the Forest Service to my questions,

Sincerely,



John Graham