

P.O.Box 771
Chama, New Mexico 87520

Jesse Juen, Director
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
New Mexico State Office
P O Box 27115
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502
August 8, 2014

RECEIVED
B.L.M.-MAILROOM
2014 AUG 12 AM 11:20
STATE OFFICE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Re: Protest against proposed sale of parcels NM-201410-001, 004-15, to be offered
October 22, 2014

Dear Director Juen,

My name is Maureen Gonzales. I have been a resident and business owner in Chama, New Mexico for the last 25 years. I am concerned about how development of oil and gas on the above proposed sites will impact the economy of this valley as well as the 30% of New Mexicans that depend on the San Juan – Rio Chama watershed for drinking water.

I operated the Chama Valley Supermarket for 18 years and Cookin' Books Café for an additional 5 years. Both businesses demonstrated the impact of tourism on our local economy. 90% of our income flowed in during the 90 days from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The end of August brought in the bow hunters who began our secondary season. Hunts of various kinds provided income into January, particularly helpful after the Cumbres-Toltec Scenic Railroad closes in October. Visitors also come here to observe wildlife, to raft the Rio Chama, to mountain bike, camp, hike, ski, snowmobile and just be in nature. All of that relates to clean water and a pristine environment. And nearly all the business in the Chama River Valley, private or government sector, is related to tourism and the outdoors.

There is an on-going and growing, mostly privately funded, effort to clean up the Chamita and Rio Chama rivers. The Village of Chama has obtained funding to build a new waste water treatment plant, private land owners have committed sections of their property to conservation easement status, residents are promoting the efficient storage of water in Heron and El Vado Lakes, coalitions are taking action to prevent wild fires and reduce damage from them to the Rio Chama and San Juan Watersheds. This is in addition to the daily conservation efforts of local ranchers and farmers during the last several years of drought. Oil and gas production in the Rio Chama Watershed is a threat to this fragile, tourism based economy as well as the water supply for 30% of the state.

I am also concerned that the geologic data in the Environmental Assessment only refers to the San Juan Basin. Our geology is very different. This site requires an Environmental Assessment specific to the site.

I would ask that you recommend Alternative A – No Action on any of these parcels – ever.

Thank you for your consideration to this matter. In addition I would like to thank the BLM for the efforts it has made with Rio Arriba County to inform residents of this issue.

Sincerely,

Maureen Gonzales