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From: Herbert Frost
Sent: 2017-07-27T22:32:07-04:00
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That's good news.

Bert Frost
Regional Director, Alaska
National Park Service

907-644-3510

On Jul 27, 2017, at 4:47 PM, Kate hammond <email_this@eenews.net> wrote:

This Greenwire story was sent to you by: Kate_hammond@nps.gov

Personal message: Looks like we're not the only ones with concerns about the proposed BLM oil and gas lease adjacent to DINO

AN E&E NEWS PUBLICATION

NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Utah governor wants BLM to re-evaluate leasing near Dinosaur

Scott Streater, E&E News reporter

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Dinosaur National Monument. NPS/Wikipedia

The Interior Department's proposal for offering three parcels near Utah's Dinosaur National Monument in an oil and gas lease sale is getting pushback from an unexpected source: the state's conservative Republican governor.

Gov. Gary Herbert (R) this week sent a letter to the Bureau of Land Management asking that it "re-evaluate" the three parcels on the southwest boundary of the monument.

Those sites are among 64 industry-nominated parcels covering more than 66,000 acres in Duchesne and Uintah counties.

BLM last month released an environmental assessment (EA) of the parcels in advance of a planned December lease sale (Greenwire, June 23). BLM officials say the assessment is part of the evaluation process and no final decision has been made whether to offer the parcels at the lease sale.

Herbert's two-page letter to Ester McCollough, BLM's Vernal Field Office manager, constitutes the governor's formal comments on the assessment.

The public comment period on the assessment ended this week.

Herbert has supported Trump administration land management policies and last month praised Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's interim report recommending that the president reduce the size of the 1.35-million-acre Bears Ears National Monument in southeast Utah.

Herbert writes that Utah "supports the lease of most of the parcels and encourages [BLM] to hold the December 2017 lease sale as currently planned." He writes that "responsible development of oil and gas resources on BLM land is critically important to the economy of eastern Utah," particularly Duchesne and Uintah counties.

"A successful lease sale of all 64 parcels would have a tremendous, positive impact on relieving the counties' high unemployment while creating stable, high-wage jobs," he wrote.

But Herbert added that he wants the agency to take a closer look at the parcels near Dinosaur to ensure that if the leases are granted and the sites developed, they won't affect the monument.

"As the parcels are near the boundary of Dinosaur National Monument, the State wishes to ensure leasing of these parcels does not impact visual resources or cause light or sound disturbances within the National Monument," he wrote.

"Even though the EA includes lease stipulations and notices for all three parcels that could sufficiently mitigate impacts from oil and gas drilling within the parcels, the State encourages BLM to provide a thoughtful review of these parcels to ensure energy developments can successfully coexist with outdoor recreation."

Herbert's concerns are supported by the National Park Service, which has said the parcels near Dinosaur would be visible from the monument's visitor center and

entrance road, as well as from other points within the monument.

Conservation groups, including the National Parks Conservation Association, oppose offering the parcels for lease sale, fearing drilling activity could affect the monument's dark night skies, as well as soundscapes and air quality.

Conservationists similarly objected to the sale of industry-nominated parcels near Zion National Park in southwest Utah from a scheduled September lease sale.

BLM pulled those parcels last month, though the agency has yet to determine whether it will pull them permanently or eventually return them to auction ([*E&E News PM*](#), June 2).

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