Dr. John Lyon
Eastern States Office Director, United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States
7450 Boston Boulevard
Springfield, Virginia 22153

RE: Protest of the Bureau of Land Management's Notice of Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale Concerning Parcels in Perry, Gallia, and Athens Counties, Ohio

Dear Dr. Lyon:
I hereby protest the agency's planned offering of ES-041-12/11, OHES 57244 ACQ (528.15 acres, Perry County); ES-042-12/11, OHES 57245 ACQ (150.65 Acres, Galia County); ES-043-12/11, OHES 57246 ACQ (264.93 acres, Athens County); ES-044-12/11, OHES 57247 ACQ (1,238.06 acres, Athens County); and ES-045-12/11, OHES 57248 ACQ (1,120.58 acres, Athens County) at the December 7, 2011 lease sale in accordance with 43 CFR 3120.1-3. The five parcels are publicly owned lands of the Wayne National Forest, and will hereinafter be referred to as Parcels 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45, respectively.
THE PROTESTING PARTIES AND THEIR INTERESTS STATEMENT OF REASONS...

I. The BLM and FS Will Violate NEPA If They Offer These Leases For Sale.

The FS (and BLM) are relying on the analysis contained in the 2006 Wayne NF LRMP, Record of Decision and Final EIS for the site-specific preleasing NEPA analysis necessary to assess the impacts arising from oil and gas exploration and development on these leases. However, none of these documents contain the site-specific analysis necessary to satisfy NEPA's requirements, especially that for a "hard look" at the impacts. Moreover, circumstances have changed and new information has arisen since the 2006 FEIS was completed, necessitating further analysis. See 40 C.F.R. § 1502.9(c)(1) (supplemental EIS must be prepared when there are significant new circumstances or information).

High volume horizontal hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," is a recently developed process of natural gas drilling that differs significantly in many respects from conventional oil and gas drilling. The 2006 LRMP FEIS touches only very briefly on directional drilling, and fails to provide any analysis of the potential environmental impacts of directional drilling. Moreover, the more specific practice of high volume directional (or "horizontal") hydraulic drilling/fracturing is nowhere mentioned in the FEIS. This is perhaps not surprising, as the high volume directional hydraulic fracturing of shale formations such as the Utica and Marcellus began only after the 2006 FEIS was completed. Appendix G to the 2006 LRMP FEIS, which projected the future development of oil and gas on the Wayne, specifically stated that directional drilling technology was not economically feasible on the Wayne: