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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
2008 NOV 13 AM 10:00
RECEIVED
CHEYENNE, WYOMING

November 10, 2008

Don Simpson, Acting State Director
Bureau of Land Management Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Re: Protest of Dec. 2, 2008 Competitive Oil and Gas Sale
Protest of 14 parcels. Specific parcels protested include: Parcels WY-0812-177,
WY 0812-178, WY-0812-179, WY-0812-180, WY-0812-181, WY-0812-182,
WY-0812-183, WY-0812-186, WY-0812-187, WY-0812-188, WY-0812-189,
WY-0812-190, WY-0812-191 and WY-0812-192.

Dear Director Simpson:

Please consider this letter as an official protest to the inclusion of the above listed parcels in the lease sale advertised by the Bureau of Land Management on October 17, 2008. I respectfully request the above parcels be withdrawn from sale because the leases would have negative affects on the recreational use of this public land and the leases would have negative, if not terminal, affects on fish and wildlife, including two species proposed for listing as threatened or endangered.

This area contains a diversity of vegetative landscapes, from sage to cedar/juniper to aspen/conifer. It offers fishing opportunities and hunting opportunities at their best. My family has spent many days in this area hunting, camping, viewing and photographing wildlife and walking around. These have been peaceful soul restoring experiences. A unique feature of this area is that, despite the existence of some two track roads, one can still feel the experience of solitude.

This all changed last fall with a drilling rig in existence on the south end of Little Mountain. On an otherwise peaceful night we had to listen to the sounds of diesel engines, the clanking and banging and of course the sirens, whatever they were for. It didn't take a biologist to observe that the elk in the area had changed their habits and moved away form the disturbance.

Having served on the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission from 1993 to 1999, and having a lucky wife who has drawn 3 antlerless elk permits for hunt area 31 over the years, I have a special concern for the wildlife in this area.

In the early 90s the area's wildlife and management thereof was a contentious issue. A committee consisting of members of the public, G&F personnel, and other agencies worked together to make this one of the premier hunting areas in the State. A great deal of effort and over \$2 million have been put forth by the

Game and Fish, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Trout Unlimited, the Bureau of Land Management and others for habitat restoration over the years. Private landowners have also contributed. Oil and gas development will render these efforts unrewarded at best.

Currant Creek and Trout Creek contain small but self sustaining populations of Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. This species has been proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Trout Unlimited have worked diligently over the years to sustain enough of a population to keep this from happening. Any threat from any development is totally unacceptable.

Sage Grouse is another species that has been proposed for listing, again with Game and Fish doing everything they can to keep this from happening. Research in Montana and Wyoming in coal-bed methane natural gas and deep-well fields suggests that impacts to leks from energy development are discernable out to a minimum of 4 miles, and that some leks within this radius have been extirpated as a direct result of energy development (Holloran 20005, Walker et al. 2007).

As one who drives a gas vehicle and heats his home with natural gas, I fully recognize the need for oil and gas development and the role it plays in our economy. Having been a Wyoming Resident for 60 years I also recognize the importance of wildlife and outdoor recreation to the public and the economy.

Over 80 percent of the land in this area is currently leased for oil and gas and has not been fully developed. Full scale development of the current leases would in all probability, significantly destroy all recreational and wildlife values. Development of the proposed leases would guarantee it. Again, I request that the above referenced parcels be withdrawn from sale.

Respectfully,



Mike Hunzie
P.O. Box 319
Diamondville, WY 83116

cc: Governor Dave Freudenthal
BLM – Rock Springs Field Office
Wyoming Game & Fish Department & Commission
Senator Barrasso's Field Representative, Pati Smith
Wyoming State Representatives and Senators - local
Sweetwater County Commission