

March 11, 2015

Dear Senators Udall and Heinrich and Congressman Lujan,

In February 2014, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published in the *Federal Register* a notice of its intent to amend the Farmington Field Office Resource Management Plan (RMP) to address the impacts of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing (together “fracking”) in the Mancos shale of the San Juan Basin. BLM explained that they had never analyzed the impacts of, nor properly planned for, fracking the Mancos shale.

Nonetheless, the BLM has leased thousands of acres and approved more than one hundred wells and associated infrastructure to drill into and frack the Mancos shale. Recently, BLM began an environmental assessment of a proposed “Piñon” oil pipeline, with a capacity to carry more than four times the volume of the area’s current production. These projects have been approved despite inadequate consultation with the public in general and with Navajo Chapter Houses in particular. These activities are a threat to the Greater Chaco Canyon Region’s communities, as well as clean air, clean water, ancient cultural resources, and our climate. Absent any prior approval in the RMP, these projects are also illegal.

Once informed of the situation, citizens have over the last two months responded in force. The Pipeline’s scoping period drew over 250 concerned citizens at public meetings and over 30,000 public comments. Under public and legal pressure, several areas offered for leasing have been withdrawn. BLM has promised better public disclosure and consultation.

These concessions, however, are not enough in the face of continued illegal and unplanned fracking and of all its consequences for local people and landscapes. In fact, despite growing concern and the BLM’s ongoing process to amend its RMP, the agency is still approving drilling permits targeting the Mancos shale.

We are asking for your offices’ support for a moratorium on all permitting of drilling, leasing of further lands for drilling, and approval of related infrastructure, including the Piñon Pipeline, until the BLM completes its study of impacts related to Mancos shale development and has approved such development in its RMP. Further, we ask your support in calling on the BLM to assure that the assessment of the proposed RMP amendment now underway includes comprehensive studies of the impacts of oil and gas development on community health, the environment, and cultural resources, as well as reasonable economic alternatives.

The situation in the San Juan Basin is simply untenable. People have tolerated enough and are organizing in response. The local BLM office cannot continue to flout the law and public wishes without consequence. Your support would play a key role in restoring balance to this rapidly degrading situation.

Thank you in advance for any assistance you can offer and thank you for your continual work protecting New Mexicans, our climate, and our state's unique natural and cultural resources.

Signed:

4Corners Idle No More

Mercury Bitsuie
Indigenize
Krystal Long

Caretakers of Land Elders and Children (CLEC) Allotment Owners and Heirs of Counselor, Nageezi and Kimbeto Areas

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