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First name: Larry

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Organization: Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife

Title:

Comments: Scoping Comments to proposed Oil and Gas Leasing in the Ruby Mountains

Attn: Susan Elliott, Program Manager

Please find attached letter from the Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife.

Thank you,

The Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife (Coalition) is hereby submitting the following scoping comments on the proposed leasing of 54,000 acres in the Ruby Mountains of Elko County Nevada. The Coalition represents sportsmen's interests dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the state's wildlife resources. Our board of directors represent the wide spectrum of sportsmen's organizations and interests from big game, waterfowl, upland game, fishing, sporting dogs, and trapping.

We strongly believe these lands in the Ruby Mountains should not be available to leasing based on irreparable impacts to our wildlife resources and the habitat on which they depend.

? The Ruby Mountains host the state's largest mule deer herd which annually migrates southward (sometimes in excess of 100 miles) to escape winter snows, and again northward into and through the proposed lease area into their summer range. Any surface disturbance of not only the mountain range itself, but also the alluvial fan areas flanking the range, can have catastrophic impacts on this herd that represents almost one-quarter of the state's mule deer population.

? Other critical wildlife resources, such as Sage Grouse and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, will be subject to long-term and irreparable impacts.

? For sportsmen, the Ruby Mountains are the "Holy Grail" and the "Crown Jewels" of Nevada. The beauty and majesty of the area is known internationally. These mountains provide more sportsmen opportunity, than any area in the state as documented by the sale of mule deer tags. In summary, we urge the US Forest Service to withdraw from consideration this ill-advised proposal.