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Oil & Gas EIS Project

Mr. Robert Potts

Natural Resources and Planning Team Leader

National Forests and Grasslands in Texas

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Lufkin, Texas 75904

Dear Mr. Potts,

I am writing in response to the proposed increase of oil/gas exploration and implementation in our National Forests and Grasslands.

Roads, drill pads, pipelines, flares, compressors, seismic testing, drilling and truck traffic, fragmented /destroyed habitat, noise and light pollution, compacted /eroded soils, sediment runoff, and impacts on drinking water, among other impacts, are incompatible with the original establishment of the National Forests and Grasslands as a public trust.

These impacts may be inconsequential to the privately owned companies who want to exploit these resources. But please bear in mind that these are PUBLIC lands, owned by people like me who have paid tax dollars to support their existence. These lands provide many services such as clean drinking water needed by an increasing population, carbon sequestering, and places of refuge for a public steadily being hemmed in by development.

Hunting, fishing, bird watching, and many other recreational activities that require wilderness are a significant part of the Texas economy. To quote the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department:

"The total economic effect from 2001 fish and wildlife-related recreation in Texas was estimated by Southwick Associates to be \$10.9 billion. In other words, if hunters, anglers, and wildlife watchers stopped spending money in Texas and did not spend these dollars on other items in state, the Texas economy would shrink by \$10.9 billion. Of this total, sport fishing accounted for \$4.6 billion, with \$3.6 billion and \$2.7 billion from hunting and wildlife watching, respectively."

Undoubtedly, this number has only increased since the 2001 report. But TPWD, like other wildlife resource/recreation agencies, has consistently been underfunded as demand for these resources has only increased.

Only 5% of Texas land is publicly owned. The remainder is of course in private hands, and rapidly being developed. Development threatens wildlife-related recreation. Yet, we are expected, to turn a blind eye to the continuing degradation of our public lands for the profit of corporations and their shareholders. Furthermore, rules have been proposed that our opinions not only do not matter, but no longer should be considered at all. Having lived in this state my entire life, I find this appallingly reprehensible.

My response to the OGLEIS is the "No Leasing Alternative" and the implementation of the "best management practices" for the oil/gas seismic exploration, development and transportation projects, as well as more current information on the environmental impacts of gas/hydraulic fracturing than that provided by the 2016 report.

Respectfully,

Regina D. Levoy