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Comments: Good Afternoon,

I am writing to express my concern and alarm to learn that these areas within the Ruby Mountains may be opened to oil and gas exploration. I was born and raised in Elko and spent the majority of my life looking up at the Rubies and clambering through their boulderfields and aspen trees. The Rubies are a Nevadan treasure. They are an important source of water in the driest state in the nation, a refuge for wildlife and game, and one of the most beautiful hidden pockets of natural beauty in the entire country.

Opening the region to oil and gas exploitation would put all of this at risk. The exploration site near Harrison Pass and the possibility of water contamination that goes with it puts the Ruby Marshes at risk. The marshes are one of the few large fishing locations in Northeastern Nevada and are without equal east of Pyramid Lake. Putting them at risk for the sake of natural gas exploitation (of which our country already has a surplus) is unacceptable. The Rubies also sustain biomes such as alpine meadows and unique animals such as mountain goats and rocky mountain bighorn sheep not found elsewhere in the state.

The proposed exploration would also disrupt hunting, a long standing tradition among Northeastern Nevadans. We have long sought to keep a careful balance of our game stocks, and the introduction of oil and natural gas drilling would put this at risk as well.

Finally, while the Rubies are breathtaking, they are fragile beauties. Northeastern Nevada lacks the water to sustain natural gas exploitation and damage caused by petroleum drilling would take decades to heal.

From the bottom of my heart I urge you not to allow this exploration to go forward. The Rubies should be a state or national park--they are meant to be enjoyed and protected by all. The Swiss do not drill in their alpine meadows, I see no reason why we should do the same to the Alps of Nevada.