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Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Ruby Mountains Oil and Gas Leasing Availability Analysis #52443. I am writing in opposition of "making available for lease approximately 54,000 acres of National Forest Land in the Ruby Mountains" portion of the Jarbidge Ranger District for oil and gas leasing by the Bureau of Land Management. The Ruby Mountains is the most important mountain range in northern Nevada. It provides important habitat for hundreds of species of insects, plants, birds and mammals, and supports the largest mule deer herd in Nevada. In addition, the vast and scenic beauty of the Ruby Mountains represents the "Yellowstone" of Nevada. This attracts 1000s of people each year, who spend time in the backcountry hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing, bird watching and horseback riding. People are able to experience the unique rugged beauty of the Ruby Mountains, an experience that is unparalleled in the west.

Through attracting 1000s of visitors each year, the Ruby Mountains play a critical role in supporting the tourism economy in Nevada, especially in Elko County. This contributes to a long-term sustainable economy whereas oil and gas production supports a boom and bust economy that results in permanent environmental degradation. The Ruby Mountains are also critical to supporting the ranching economy in Nevada, especially in Elko County. These mountains are the source for water and livestock forage that has supported ranching families and the associated local businesses for generations. Oil and gas development and production will very likely result in reductions to forage available for livestock and degraded water quality. These impacts are permanent and not mitigatable.

The National Forest Land in the Ruby Mountains is public land that belongs to all the citizens of the United States. Making available 54,000 acres of National Forest Land in the Ruby Mountains for oil and gas leasing by the Bureau of Land Management is not in the best interest of the American public. It represents a short-term corporate interest that will likely result in permanent degradation of public land at the expense of citizens who value and appreciate the Ruby Mountains and the fish and wildlife that inhabit the mountains.