

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2017 5:44:31 PM

First name: W

Last name: S

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Ruby Oil and Gas Comment

Dear Ms. Elliott,

I am writing to comment on the proposal to make 54,000 acres of public lands and mineral rights available for oil and gas leasing in the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest on the western slopes of the Ruby Mountains. I urge you to closely scrutinize and ultimately reject this proposal that would only benefit a narrow few in the short-term while harming our public resources that enrich all of us over the long-term. The Ruby Mountains are a special place for so many, and a burgeoning outdoors-persons' paradise. The peace and tranquility sought by human visitors and wildlife is essential to their character. As a writer in the Elko Daily Free Press has noted, I am also very concerned about the potential impact of oil or gas drilling on such scenic and multi-use lands: "The value of the Ruby Mountains is inestimable to the ecology of the region and to generations of Nevada residents." Will review of this proposal include surveys and interviews with the numerous other users of the National Forest? Or at least some quantification of how many users enjoy these lands in their current condition? How will their concerns be weighed against the multinational oil and gas companies that have no long-term interest in protecting our public lands?

This proposal is truly a ground disturbing proposal, and as soon as possible there must be detailed review of how oil and gas exploration and extraction would mar the landscape and harass and harm wildlife, especially special status species like the sage grouse, migratory and resident birds, and the Lahontan cutthroat trout. Road building to access these leases, which is a ground disturbing activity in and of itself, would bring invasive plant species and increased wildfire risk, as well as undue stress to wildlands and important habitat for mule deer, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and the sage grouse, squeezing these species into even more limited terrain. Please consider the true multi-use qualities of the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest and the Ruby Mountains and stop this proposal to spoil these lands by solely designating them for oil and gas development at the expense of all other uses.

Thank you,  
Will Spangler