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Organization:

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Comments: Drilling in the Ruby Mountains

Hello,

I am writing to express my concern on the proposed leasing for oil exploration of lands on the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest in the Ruby Mountains Ranger District in Elko County Nevada. These lands, located just south of Lamoille Canyon to Sherman Creek south of Harrison Pass, are unsuitable for conducting oil and gas exploration. The geology of this part of the Ruby Mountain Range is typically a granitic quartz monsonite, which is very unlikely to contain oil reserves. The country is steep and subject to higher precipitation than the lower elevations lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management where previous exploration activity has already occurred. These conditions would make it more expensive to develop these leases and much more difficult to reclaim. The lack of oil bearing geology and the difficult access to drill would suggest that these proposed lease locations are not conducive to successful drilling outcomes. Why would the U.S. Forest Service allow this potential degradation of this undisturbed land for little potential return?

In the last decade several oil exploration companies have drilled at least five oil exploration wells on BLM lands in the vicinity of this proposed project and to date none of those wells have developed into productive wells. In fact, all have been plugged and abandoned as the companies that drilled the wells chose to conduct their exploration activities elsewhere. Two of the most recent wells were drilled using fracking methodology and those wells were also unable to produce economic quantities of oil. Based on the previous experience on BLM lands nearby, why would any serious consideration be given to permitting oil exploration on U.S. Forest lands that do not have the appropriate mineralogy to support oil bearing substrates?

Based on the lack of success with the earlier exploration on lower elevation lands and the difficulty with conducting drilling activities in steeper and less potentially productive geology, I would like to recommend the U.S. Forest Service remove these parcels from consideration for oil and gas exploration.

Betti Magney

Concerned Elko County Resident