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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Ruby Oil and Gas

I would like the following letter to be part of the public comment record of the Ruby Oil and Gas Leasing Availability Analysis.

I was born in Lamoille, Elko County, Nevada, in 1949. At the time my father, Gerald Horton, was a USFS deputy district ranger on the Humboldt National Forest. For 12 years my family lived in various guard stations and ranger stations in Elko and Humboldt counties, and in Elko. Of course, I became well acquainted with the land and natural resources throughout the Ruby Mountains and other parts of the Humboldt NF. There were dozens of fishing trips in Thomas Canyon and the Ruby Marshes; deer and gamebird hunting all over Harrison Pass. When my father wasn't on horseback, he often had me in the truck with him as he did grazing studies all over the rangeland.

I know firsthand that many parts of northern Nevada are the wastelands of what seems to have been a historical war on Nevada resources with an obvious strategy: "Grab whatever you can, however you can, and haul it away." This has resulted in literally hundreds of instances of abandoned mining structures and workings; toxic and eroded tailings piles; poisoned surface waters and ground water; abandoned roads; overgrazed and eroded land hosting invasive species; abandoned habitations; and the list goes on and on.

Sadly, this war on Nevada continues, with the same results. This oil and gas leasing proposal is especially tragic for Nevada because today, better choices exist to supply energy needs than oil and gas. Competent marked and economic analysis of energy, and there are hundreds available, cite the decline of fossil fuels and their rapid replacement by renewable energy sources such as solar and wind, due to market forces. Indeed, the state of Nevada is a national leader in renewable energy:

Nevada ranked second in the nation in utility-scale net electricity generation from geothermal energy and fourth in utility-scale net generation from solar energy in 2016; 16.2% of Nevada's utility-scale net electricity generation in 2016 came from those two sources. State policy is to have 25% of its energy sourced from in-state renewables by 2025. It is beyond ironic that the very land proposed for this leasing is very appropriate as a host for renewable generation.

We and the USFS have a much better choice for this land than to continue our sad war on Nevada. Please make that choice.

Sincerely,

Thomas Horton

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