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Title:

Comments: Reject Ruby Mountains Oil and Gas Leasing

May 30, 2018

Jenna Padilla, U.S. Forest Service

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

Nevada's Ruby Mountains are in the crosshairs of the oil and gas industry. A mountain oasis in the Great Basin of Northern Nevada, the Ruby Mountains are the source of water for the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge and sustain numerous imperiled fish and wildlife species.

There is absolutely no need to frack here, yet the Forest Service is considering opening up 54,000 acres of public lands to oil and gas leasing. Such a move would only fuel industry speculation and use our public lands to line the pockets of oil and gas companies.

Right now, the U.S. Forest Service is considering opening up 54,000 acres of the Ruby Mountains to oil and gas development, a move that stands to permanently alter and destroy this iconic Great Basin Mountain Range.

Under pressure from Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, the Forest Service is being pressed to agree to allow the leasing of lands to the oil and gas industry, a move that would effectively privatize the landscape.

It's not an exaggeration to say this would be a devastating move. The Rubies are the source of water for the nearby Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The Rubies' forested peaks stand as a vital refuge for imperiled fish and wildlife like Lahontan cutthroat trout, sage grouse, and more.

Forest Service, Americans don't support sacrificing such critical public lands.

It gets worse. Right now, barely any oil and gas development actually exists in Nevada. In fact, all indications are that leasing in the Rubies is all about enabling industry speculation.

Our public lands deserve better. They shouldn't be allowed to be used by oil and gas companies to pad their assets in the hopes that prices will rise.

I am writing to urge you to deny the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's request that you open up the Ruby Mountains of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest to oil and gas leasing.

The Forest Service has absolute discretion to withhold its consent to federal oil and gas leasing beneath National Forest System lands. The agency is under no obligation to allow any leasing.

Given the importance of the Ruby Mountains for fish and wildlife, for outdoor recreation, and for our American heritage of public lands, leasing in the Ruby Mountains is a terrible idea.

The fact that the Rubies are the source of water for the nearby Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge raises serious concerns that any future oil and gas development will pose unacceptable risks to surface and groundwater.

There is no need to lease the Ruby Mountains. Right now, there is barely any oil and gas production in the State of Nevada and all leasing appears to be completely speculative. I urge the Forest Service not to allow our public lands to be used to fuel industry speculation.

Please, reject any and all oil and gas leasing in the Ruby Mountains of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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