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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I am writing to formally object to the proposed leasing of ten parcels within the Hewlett-Packard/Battle Creek (HPBE) District of the Routt National Forest (Project #329269) for oil and gas exploration and development.

Leasing these protected National Forest System lands for fossil fuel development appears inconsistent with the Forest Service's multiple-use and sustained-yield mandate and the agency's duties under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to take a "hard look" at direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts before authorizing such activities. In particular, the proposed action raises significant concerns regarding habitat fragmentation, road and well-pad proliferation, impairment of wildlife corridors, and degradation of surface and groundwater resources associated with drilling, high-volume water use, and potential spills.

[sanjuancitizens](<https://www.sanjuancitizens.org/oil-and-gas/court-decision-prevents-unstudied-fracking-in-santa-fe-national-forest/>)

Oil and gas development in forested headwaters has repeatedly been found by courts to require more thorough analysis of air emissions, greenhouse gas impacts, and water quantity and quality effects than agencies initially provided, resulting in lease sales being vacated or remanded. Proceeding with lease issuance here, without robust, site-specific analysis of these issues and of reasonably foreseeable development scenarios, would risk similar noncompliance. The cumulative effects of developing multiple parcels across this district-including increased truck traffic, noise, light pollution, and long-term surface disturbance-must be rigorously evaluated rather than treated as isolated projects.

[blm]([https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/Central%20Coast%20Oil%20and%20Gas%20RMPA%20Protest%20Report%20\(October%204,%202019\)_0.pdf](https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/Central%20Coast%20Oil%20and%20Gas%20RMPA%20Protest%20Report%20(October%204,%202019)_0.pdf))

Furthermore, the agencies' own limited staffing and funding to administer and monitor oil and gas activities on National Forest lands have been documented as a persistent constraint, casting doubt on their ability to enforce mitigation measures, bonding, and reclamation requirements over the long term. In a high-value landscape that provides critical ecosystem services, recreation, and habitat, the risk of inadequate oversight and irreversible environmental harm weighs heavily against leasing.

[federalregister](<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/28/2026-01655/oil-and-gas-resources>)

For these reasons, I urge the Forest Service to decline consent to lease these parcels and instead prioritize conservation, recreation, and climate-resilient management of the Routt National Forest. At a minimum, no leasing decision should be made until a comprehensive NEPA review is completed that fully discloses and evaluates the long-term environmental, climate, and public-use consequences of oil and gas development in this area, with meaningful opportunities for public participation.

[wilderness](<https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/new-rule-aims-escalate-oil-and-gas-drilling-our-national-forests>)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed action.