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Organization:
Title:
Comments: July 16, 2026

District Ranger Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests
925 Weiss Drive Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

RE: Comment in opposition to the proposed oil and gas lease sale on approximately 14,000 acres in the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District, Routt National Forest

Dear District Ranger,

I am writing to urge the Forest Service to deny consent to the proposed oil and gas lease sale covering roughly 14,000 acres in the Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District. I submit this comment as a resident of Routt County, and one who has recreated on these lands for the last 30 years.
The economics do not add up.

It makes no sense to lease away the lands that form the engine of the tourism and recreation economy driving Northwest Colorado, in exchange for a heavily subsidized oil play that historically has not produced - and that, even in the best case, would return only a modest benefit. Federal onshore leasing in this part of the state has a long record of speculative bids on parcels that are never drilled, or that are drilled and quickly abandoned. Meanwhile, the outdoor recreation economy here is not speculative. It is the region's actual, measurable, year-over-year source of jobs, small business revenue, sales tax, and property value. Hunters, anglers, hikers, skiers, mountain bikers, and outfitters spend real money in Steamboat Springs, Craig, Hayden, Yampa, Oak Creek, and Clark- every single season, without a federal subsidy propping it up.

Trading a durable, self-sustaining economic base for a marginal and heavily subsidized one is a bad deal for the public that owns these lands. The Forest Service is not obligated to make that trade, and it should not.

Much of this acreage is inventoried roadless - and it should stay that way.
A substantial portion of the proposed lease area falls within Colorado Roadless Areas. Hunters and anglers come to these lands precisely because they are undeveloped, quiet, and hard to get into. Roadless country is what holds elk and mule deer through the season. It is what produces the backcountry hunting opportunity that Colorado is known for and that draws resident and nonresident hunters alike. Leasing sets in motion the expectation of development: roads, pads, pipelines, traffic, noise, and fragmentation. Once that character is gone, it does not come back, and no reclamation plan restores it.

I want these roadless lands to stay roadless. Leasing them is inconsistent with the Roadless Rule's purpose and with the values that make this district worth managing.

Additional concerns I ask the Forest Service to address:
*Fragmentation of big game summer range, winter range, and migration corridors, and the cumulative effect on herd objectives already under pressure in this part of the state.
*Impacts to headwaters, streams, and wetlands feeding the Yampa and Elk River drainages, and to the water supplies and fisheries that depend on them.
*Cumulative effects of this lease sale combined with existing and reasonably foreseeable development, rather than a parcel-by-parcel analysis that never adds anything up.
*The reasonably foreseeable development scenario itself: if the agency's own analysis concludes that little or no

production is likely, that is a reason not to lease, not a reason to dismiss the impacts as hypothetical.
*The no-leasing alternative, which should be analyzed fully and on equal footing rather than treated as a formality.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Forest Service to deny consent to lease and to select the no-leasing alternative for all parcels in this proposal. At a minimum, no parcel within a Colorado Roadless Area should be offered.

Thank you for considering these comments and for your work on behalf of these public lands.

Sincerely,

Kevin Rogers