



Erin Kelley <erin.kelley@cityofsalida.com>

Fwd: FW: Current Mountain Pact Activities // Salida

1 message

Erin Kelley <erin.kelley@cityofsalida.com>
To: Erin Kelley <erin.kelley@cityofsalida.com>

Fri, Apr 2, 2021 at 1:51 PM

From: Anna Peterson <anna@themountainpact.org>
Sent: Friday, April 2, 2021 12:02
To: P. T. Wood <pt.wood@salidaelected.com>
Subject: Re: Current Mountain Pact Activities // Salida

Hello Mayor Wood,

I wanted to follow up with Mountain Pact efforts and ways you can get involved this spring. *Please share this with council/commissioner members if appropriate.*

In January, President Biden signed executive orders that will help tackle climate change by pausing oil and gas leasing on public lands and conserving 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030. ***We want to bolster these efforts, as we did in January with our [letter signed by over 130 Western local elected officials](#), to show support from Mountain communities across the west - like yours!***

1. Effort to Protect 30% of Lands and Waters by 2030

The foundation of the 30x30 campaign includes locally driven conservation efforts that work towards a more equitable and inclusive vision for nature conservation. The intent is for federal, state, local, and Tribal governments; agricultural and forest landowners; fishermen, hunters, anglers, outdoor recreation users and many other key stakeholders to identify and implement collaborative conservation strategies.

Local voices like yours will be critical to how specific protection strategies are implemented and the overall success of the effort.

HOW TO TAKE ACTION:

- Join The Mountain Pact for a [webinar on Monday, April 12 from noon to 1 pm](#) with the U.S. Director of the [Campaign For Nature](#) about the 30x30 initiative and how we can work to implement strategies in our communities to help achieve this goal. **Please RSVP today!**
- Ask your **Town/City/County governing body to pass a [resolution](#) to show support for the 30x30 effort.** Let [Anna](#) know if she can get you any more information on these resolutions.
- See more [detailed background information here](#).



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-mountain-pact-30x30-background-webinar-tickets-147900324853>

2. Resolution in Support of Pause on and New Oil and Gas Leasing on Federal Lands

We're encouraging city/town council and county commissions to join other communities in the Mountain Pact Network and consider **passing a resolution that expresses support for President Biden's executive order that temporarily pauses new oil and gas leasing on federal public lands so the process may be reviewed.**

Santa Fe County, the [Town of Basalt](#), and the Town of Ridgway have all passed resolutions and many more communities have their own resolutions on upcoming meeting agendas.

HOW TO TAKE ACTION:

- [Download the resolution here](#) and see these links for more [topline](#) and [detailed background](#) information.
 - If you adopt a resolution, please let us know - Anna@TheMountainPact.org
 - Also send to the Biden Administration and your congressional offices. (The Mountain Pact can help and send you contact information if needed).
 - During the Department of Interior [review](#), "[Members of the public can submit additional information through April 15 to inform Interior's interim report at \[energyreview@ios.doi.gov\]\(mailto:energyreview@ios.doi.gov\)](#)"
- Consider authoring an opinion editorial like this [one](#) from City of Reno Council member Devon Reese.

I hope you're doing well, the vaccine roll-out continues to go smoothly in your community, and you are having a safe and good start to spring. Thank you for participating with The Mountain Pact Network!

Anna

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ANNA PETERSON

Executive Director | The Mountain Pact

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in over 80 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.

**A RESOLUTION OF THE [COUNTY/CITY/TOWN OF NAME , STATE] SUPPORTING EFFORTS
TO PROTECT 30 PERCENT OF U.S. LANDS, WATERS, AND OCEANS BY 2030**

WHEREAS, the United States is facing a conservation and climate crisis as nature declines and [greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase](#); and

WHEREAS, [science shows us that worldwide biodiversity is deteriorating at a faster rate than at any time in human history](#); and

WHEREAS, [from 2001 to 2017, more than 24 million acres of land were lost to human development in the lower 48 United States](#), which equals the loss of one football field-sized patch of land every 30 seconds; and

WHEREAS, scientists say that the loss of biodiversity, the increasing number of extreme weather events, and human encroachment upon wildlife habitat may [increase the risk of the transmission of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and SARS](#).

WHEREAS, [scientists warn we must conserve and restore at least 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030 if we hope to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems as well as mitigate the impacts of climate change](#); and

WHEREAS, the global 30x30 campaign is a science-based initiative to conserve at least 30 percent of U.S. lands, waters, and oceans by the year 2030 to address the twin threats of climate change and the rapid loss of biodiversity, waters, and natural places; and

WHEREAS, the 30x30 campaign will include locally led conservation efforts; work towards a more equitable and inclusive vision for nature conservation; honor the sovereignty of Tribal nations; support private conservation; and ensure the effort is guided by science; and

WHEREAS, the 30x30 campaign relies on efforts by federal, state, local, and Tribal governments; agricultural and forest landowners; fishermen, hunters, anglers, outdoor recreation users and many other key stakeholders to identify and implement collaborative strategies; and

WHEREAS, every person, regardless of race, background, or economic status, should have access to close-to-home opportunities to get outside in nature; and

WHEREAS, our natural places help to provide food security, clean air to breathe, and clean water to drink, while offering us a wide range of health benefits; and

WHEREAS, wilderness, wildlife refuges, national conservation lands, monuments, and other protected areas drive our local economies and conserved places provide access for hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, and other outdoor recreation pursuits; and

WHEREAS, conserved private lands, including working forests, farms and ranches protect open spaces, preserve threatened wildlife, and help maintain our community's way of life; and

WHEREAS, over 100 [economists and scientists have found that the global economy would benefit from the creation of far more protected areas on land and at sea than we have today](#); and

WHEREAS, protected public lands are the backbone of our state's outdoor recreation industry, which generates [\\$788 billion in consumer spending nationally and supports 5.2 million](#) jobs; and

WHEREAS, [77 percent of voters in the Rocky Mountain West](#) support setting a national goal of conserving 30 percent of land and waters in the United States by 2030 and [61 percent](#) of voters are concerned about the future of land, water, air, and wildlife.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the [County/City/Town of _____](#), State stand with President Biden, U.S. agencies, members of Congress, state and local officials, and other public, private and nonprofit partners in support of science-based, locally-led conservation efforts to protect at least 30 percent of lands, waters, and oceans by 2030; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call on the U.S. government, Congress, and state and local leaders to significantly increase the tools and resources available to achieve locally-driven conservation projects, and to facilitate collaboration and good-faith conversations among all people living in the United States as we work together to address our biodiversity and climate crises.

Head Commissioner/Mayor [NAME](#)

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this [##](#) day of [\(FILL OUT\)](#), 2021.

ATTEST: [\(FILL OUT\)](#)



30 x 30

Efforts To Protect 30 Percent of U.S. Lands and Waters by 2030

WHAT IS THIS EFFORT?

The global [30x30 campaign](#) is a science-based initiative to conserve at least 30 percent of U.S. lands, waters, and oceans by the year 2030 to address the twin threats of climate change and the rapid loss of biodiversity, waters, and natural places.

The foundation of the 30x30 campaign includes locally driven conservation efforts that work towards a more equitable and inclusive vision for nature conservation; honoring the sovereignty of Tribal nations; support private land conservation efforts; and ensure that the processes are guided by science. The intent is for Federal, state, local, and Tribal governments; agricultural and forest landowners; fishermen, hunters, anglers, outdoor recreation users and many other key stakeholders to identify and implement collaborative conservation strategies.

On January 27, 2021, President Biden signed three [executive orders](#) that will help tackle climate change by pausing oil and gas leasing on public lands and [conserving 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030](#). These orders will help boost the economy as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and move us towards a more sustainable future. In mid-January, the Mountain Pact released a [report](#) and [over 120 Western local elected officials](#) signed a [letter](#) asking the new Biden administration to take many of these steps.

This ten-year goal of conserving 30% of the U.S. by 2030, an inclusive and bold vision for safeguarding America's lands, waters, and wildlife that will include the efforts of people across the country on the frontlines of conserving, using, and enjoying nature. You can read more details in the [Department of Interior Fact Sheet](#).

WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

- [Scientists](#) warn [we must conserve and restore at least 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030 if we hope to preserve biodiversity and ecosystems as well as mitigate the impacts of climate change](#).
- The United States is facing a conservation and climate crisis as nature declines and [greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase](#).
- [Science shows us that worldwide biodiversity is deteriorating at a faster rate than at any time in human history](#).
- [From 2001 to 2017, more than 24 million acres of land were lost to human development in the lower 48 United States](#), which equals the loss of one football field-sized patch of land every 30 seconds.

- [77 percent of voters in the Rocky Mountain West](#) support setting a national goal of conserving 30 percent of land and waters in the United States by 2030 and [61 percent](#) of voters are concerned about the future of land, water, air, and wildlife.

PUBLIC HEALTH BENEFITS

- Scientists say that the loss of biodiversity, the increasing number of extreme weather events, and human encroachment upon wildlife habitat may [increase the risk of the transmission of infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and SARS](#).
- Our natural places help to provide food security, clean air to breathe, and clean water to drink, while offering us a wide range of health benefits; and every person, regardless of race, background, or economic status, should have access to close-to-home opportunities to get outside in nature.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Wilderness, wildlife refuges, national conservation lands, monuments, and other protected areas drive our local economies and conserved places provide access for hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, and other outdoor recreation pursuits.
- Conserved private lands, including working forests, farms and ranches protect open spaces, preserve threatened wildlife, and help maintain our community's way of life.
- [100 economists and scientists have found that the global economy would benefit from the creation of far more protected areas on land and at sea than we have today](#).
- Protected public lands are the backbone of our states' outdoor recreation industries, which generates [\\$788 billion in consumer spending nationally and support 5.2 million](#) jobs.

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

The support of, and coordination among federal, state, and local land management agencies will be critical to achieving the 30x30 goal. Likewise, the use of conservation easements and restoration programs will be instrumental in helping to protect private lands.

State, County, and Local-Level Protection Strategies

- Create more local parks and open spaces
- Create more state wildlife areas, state parks
- Secure more conservation easements
- Use more conservation leases for state trust lands
- Create more preservation designations - e.g a wildlife corridor designation similar to the Outstanding Natural Resource Waters designation
- Require state land managers to comment on federal land management plans to protect for biodiversity and increase carbon sequestration
- Focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in land protection efforts
- Take lands off the table for development
- Fund more local conservation efforts
- Rewilding areas

Federal-Level Protection Strategies

- State land manager, working with their congressional delegation, identify lands and waters in need of federal protection

Create New Federal Executive and Legislative Protections

- National parks
- National monuments
- Wilderness Areas
- Wilderness Study Areas in Resource Management Plans.
- National Wildlife Refuges

Expand Federal Working Lands Programs to Increase Carbon Sequestration and Soil Health

Protect Private lands:

- Expand state and federal restoration programs
- Create more conservation easements on private lands
- Offer additional technical assistance for private landowners to protect habitat

Tribal lands and sovereign nations

Department of Defense Lands

HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION

1. **Attend the upcoming Mountain Pact webinar about 30x30:** The Mountain Pact will be hosting a [webinar](#) with the U.S. Director of the [Campaign For Nature](#) about President Biden's 30x30 conservation goal of protecting 30% of land and water by 2030 and how we can work to implement this goal in our communities. [We invite you join us on Monday, April 12 from noon to 1 pm for this webinar - please RSVP today!](#) We'll be sharing a recording of this event as well.
2. **Ask your Town/City/County governing body to adopt a resolution in support of the 30x30 goal:** Have your community sign onto [this resolution](#) or a revised version of it that expresses support for 30x30. You can find more background [here](#) (this document link).
 - a. Make sure to adjust the resolution as needed to reflect your community's needs
 - b. If you adopt a resolution, please let us know - Anna@TheMountainPact.org
 - c. Send the resolution to local media, the Biden Administration and your congressional offices

Scott de la Vega, Acting Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240
3. **Complete a survey about the 30x30 goal:** You can [fill out this survey](#) so your voice is reflected in the 30x30 planning effort.
4. Consider **authoring an opinion editorial** to show your support for the 30x30 initiative.

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT BIDEN’S PAUSE ON NEW OIL AND GAS LEASING ON FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS

WHEREAS, our vast network of federal public lands offers abundant natural beauty, a wealth of natural resources, a vital economic engine for local communities, and a sought after unique quality of life for residents of communities adjacent to them; and

WHEREAS, it’s critical that our public lands and waters are managed responsibly and sustainably so they can remain open and accessible to present and future generations; and

WHEREAS, we support the legal requirement that our federal lands be managed under the ‘multiple use’ standard to best meet the present and future needs of the American people; and believe that the federal land management policies should be developed with input from local communities and public land users, and incorporate the best available science; and

WHEREAS, federal public land policy should ensure that the companies extracting natural resources provide a fair return to federal and state taxpayers while also protecting wildlife and providing the opportunity for the development of sustainable economic non-extractive activity such as outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, our state is experiencing the devastating impacts of a warming climate including severe heat and drought, which are making wildfires more frequent and extreme; an increase in emissions of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas emitted on our public lands; extremes in precipitation; and dust on snow, which causes snowfall to evaporate prematurely; and

WHEREAS, [one-quarter of the country’s greenhouse gas emissions come from fossil fuel activity on public lands](#); and

WHEREAS, in [2018 pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels caused 8.7 million or one in five deaths globally](#); and

WHEREAS, as elected leaders, it is our responsibility to take and support prudent and pragmatic steps to reverse climate change and mitigate its devastating impacts by reducing the amount of greenhouse gases and other forms of pollution that contribute to climate change,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County/City/Town of (FILL OUT), that:

1. We applaud the Biden administration’s executive order that temporarily pauses new oil and gas leasing on federal public lands and encourage the administration to:
 - a. Modernize the federal oil and gas leasing program to ensure the oil and gas companies that hold leases and extract natural resources provide a fair return to federal and state taxpayers; and
 - b. Develop a plan to phase out the production of fossil fuels, which are a major contributor to climate change, in a way that also supports the workers, communities, and states that currently have fossil fuel dependent economies.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this ## day of (FILL OUT), 2021.

ATTEST: (FILL OUT)



Oil and Gas Pause Resolution Background

President Biden's Executive Order - January 27, 2021 Pause on New Oil and Gas Leasing on U.S. Federal Public Lands

Public lands are the backbone of our Western mountain communities and vital for our way of life. Over the last year as the country has navigated COVID, residents and visitors are finding solace in the outdoors more than ever before. We are thrilled with the Biden administration's forward looking [executive orders](#) that will result in bold climate action and protection for our public lands. These actions will help boost the economy as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and will move us towards a more sustainable future.

The [pause on new oil and gas leasing on federal public lands](#) was one section out of three in President Biden's executive order on January 27, 2021. By pausing oil and gas leasing for the first time in 40 years, the Biden Administration rightly recognized the federal oil and gas leasing program is fundamentally broken and must be overhauled to address the climate crisis, generate a fair return for taxpayers, respect local landowners, and support communities in the inevitable transition away from fossil fuels.

Please see below for more background on why we encourage your County/City/Town Commission/Council to adopt a resolution showing support for this pause.

Oil and Gas Leasing Pause

HITTING PAUSE ON NEW OIL AND GAS LEASING (From the *Department of Interior Fact Sheet*) -

"The Executive Order will direct the Department of the Interior to pause new oil and natural gas leasing on public lands and offshore waters, concurrent with a comprehensive review of the federal oil and gas program. The targeted pause **does not impact** existing operations or permits for valid, existing leases, which are continuing to be reviewed and approved. The order does not restrict energy activities on private or state lands, or lands that the United States holds in trust or restricted status for Tribes or individual Indians.

The President's action will provide a chance to **review** the federal oil and gas program to ensure that it serves the public interest and to **restore balance** on America's public lands and waters to benefit current and future generations. Fossil fuel extraction on public lands accounts for nearly a quarter of all U.S. [greenhouse gas emissions](#). Irresponsible leasing of public lands and waters impacts communities' access to clean air, clean water, and outdoor recreation; carves up important wildlife habitat; and threatens cultural and sacred sites. Multiple bills in Congress have been introduced in recent years to reform the outdated program, including those to better ensure the public is not shut out of land management and leasing decisions; to address the mounting cleanup and remediation costs of orphan wells scattered across the country; and to provide a fair return to taxpayers for the use of their resources."

Why Is This Pause Necessary?

- Under our [current system](#), oil and gas companies nominate public lands they want to drill, purchase oil and gas leases at obscenely low rates, easily obtain drilling permits, and pay taxpayers low and outdated royalty rates, depriving governments of much-needed revenue.
- Onshore, of the more than 26 million acres under lease to the oil and gas industry, nearly 13.9 million (or 53%) of those acres are unused and non-producing.

- The Trump administration conducted a fire sale of public lands and waters, offering more than 25 million acres onshore during the past four years, 5.6 million of which were purchased.
- This pause does not affect current drilling or previously approved permits. If a project has been permitted but not started, the company is still free to move forward. The Associated Press reported that companies stockpiled thousands of permits at the end of Donald Trump's presidency to allow drilling for several years.
- A review of this nature is not unprecedented; similar reviews have occurred for the federal oil, gas, and coal programs in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Fossil fuel production on public lands causes about a quarter of U.S. greenhouse gas pollution.
- When companies go bankrupt and orphan their wells -- which is happening with great frequency right now -- taxpayers are left on the hook to clean up their mess and deal with contaminated drinking water, polluted air, and threatens wildlife habitat.
- The Land and Water Conservation Fund would not be impacted by preventing new offshore drilling. Federal energy revenues total about \$7 billion and current production revenues, without opening new areas to leasing, fully cover LWCF's \$900 million annual deposits with an additional \$3 billion a year remaining in the Treasury General Account.
- As this is a pause on new leases, community projects funded with royalties won't be impacted. Education funding should not be subject to the boom and bust cycles of the oil and gas industry. We need to diversify our economy, transition away from the boom and bust cycles of fossil fuels, and invest in good paying clean energy jobs of the future.

MORE INFORMATION

Currently Leased Lands

- According to the latest Bureau of Land Management data, 51 percent of all active oil and gas leases are not being used and about 90 percent of lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the West -- close to 200 million acres -- were open to oil and gas leasing.
- Only 23 percent of BLM lands are considered to have a moderate to high potential for oil and gas development.
- The federal onshore program accounted for just 5% of oil produced in the United States between 2008 and 2017. This is because "the most promising prospects and higher returns" are found on non-federal lands, as well as offshore.

Climate Change Impacts

This pause offers an opportunity to tackle the climate crisis head on by curbing dangerous pollution from endless drilling that also contaminates our waters and oceans and disproportionately threatens low-income communities and communities of color.

- Fossil fuel production on public lands causes about a quarter of U.S. greenhouse gas pollution. Research shows that common sense changes to the federal oil and gas leasing program would reduce carbon emissions by 100 million tons per year while generating \$7 billion in additional revenue.
- Beyond the profound financial risk to taxpayers, orphaned wells are environmental hazards that threaten drinking water supplies, endanger wildlife, and serve as a significant source of methane pollution.
- Healthy public lands and waters support valuable local outdoor recreation and tourism economies, give us the opportunity to connect with nature and the many health benefits it provides, and support the ample responsible production of renewable energy that can help communities dependent on fossil fuels transition to a new energy economy while improving their resilience to climate impacts.
- Tackling the climate crisis is both an obligation and an opportunity, and we must ensure that the communities and the workers that work in the fossil fuel industry are not left behind in the transition to clean energy. It is important that this critical step also include efforts to ensure a just and equitable transition to a clean-energy based economy by creating stable, good-paying jobs and a healthier future for all communities.

Economic Impacts

Companies must pay the federal government a royalty for the oil and gas they extract from federal lands and waters -- but the rates, at 12.5% for onshore tracts, have been frozen since the 1920s. Offshore, the rates have ranged recently from 12.5% to 18.75%.

- The current approach consistently shortchanges taxpayers and means annual rental fees for some leased acres can cost less than a cup of coffee.
- Lease bids account for just 10% of the revenue generated by the onshore program.
- A leasing pause will have little impact on day-to-day employment in the oil and gas industry and even oil industry analysts reject the idea that a single decision like this would have a significant impact on oil prices.
- The onshore leasing program has hemorrhaged revenue for decades. According to one estimate, the program's outdated royalty rate cost taxpayers \$12.4 billion in revenue between 2010 and 2019.
- The industry has been shedding jobs for some time. Since 2014, the industry has lost nearly 20% of its workforce. Ongoing consolidation within the industry is exacerbating this trend.
 - Since 2010, U.S. oil and gas companies accrued more than \$340 billion in losses, operating on increasing debt in order to boost production.
 - In the oil and gas industry, profitability and drilling decisions are determined by the price of oil. Currently, WTI crude is trading around \$52/barrel, much lower than crude prices at the beginning of the shale boom.
- The costs of repeated boom-and-bust cycles are mounting, in particular from orphaned wells abandoned by bankrupt operators.
 - Oil and gas CEOs don't have to put down enough money to clean up after themselves thanks to outdated federal bonding rates.
 - The number of oil and gas producers filing for bankruptcy is rising, which is only worsening the already-dire orphaned well problem in the U.S. There are currently about 57,000 orphaned wells throughout the country, and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission estimates that as many as another 746,000 wells may be orphaned as well.
 - It can cost upwards of \$300,000 to plug a modern oil and gas well, but the BLM requires companies to post a bond of just \$10,000 per well. This rate is even less for companies that use national or statewide bonds, which can cover hundreds or thousands of wells.
 - This could cost the public hundreds of millions – if not billions – of dollars, at a time when states are already facing serious budget deficits and can't afford to clean up industry's mess – yet the BLM has collected just \$204 million in reclamation bonds from the industry.
 - For example, the State of New Mexico estimates that it will cost over \$3 billion to safely reclaim the state's 136,000+ wells, many of which are located on federal land. The state has collected just \$17 million in reclamation bonds, while the BLM has only \$204 million in bonds for federal wells throughout the country.

Moving Forward

We look forward to working with the Biden administration on pursuing a just and equitable transition to a clean-energy based economy, creating stable good paying jobs and a better future for all communities.

- Presidents have suspended public lands leasing at least four times before in accordance with the Mineral Leasing Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.
- According to the Government Accountability Office, raising royalty rates would provide more money for state and local governments. The royalty rate for oil and gas drilling hasn't been updated since the Woodrow Wilson administration. It was set at a minimum of 12.5 percent when he signed the Mineral Leasing Act in 1920 — but hasn't budged up since, even as drilling for oil became more lucrative and less risky over time.

- By increasing appropriately-sited renewable energy generation, the administration can move our public lands towards a future as net-zero sources of climate emissions, all while creating jobs and ensuring state and local governments have new revenue streams.
- Congress also has the opportunity to create new jobs – as many as 24,000 – by paying oil and gas workers to clean-up the nearly 57,000 orphaned wells that are scattered throughout the country. Investing in cleaning up abandoned wells could create more than 24,000 jobs while protecting public lands for outdoor recreation like hunting, fishing, and hiking would put even more people back to work in the outdoor recreation economy.
- in 2020, Western senators introduced four oil and gas reform bills that would go a long way toward bringing the leasing program into the 21st century: Sen. Cortez Masto’s bill to end low potential lands leasing, Sens. Udall and Grassley’s bill to modernize the onshore program’s fiscal rates, Sen. Tester’s bill to end noncompetitive leasing, and Sen. Bennet’s bonding reform and orphaned well clean-up bill.
- Managing more public lands for conservation and recreation can harness the booming outdoor industry, supporting jobs both locally and throughout supply chains.
 - Outdoor recreation is the economic lifeblood of many western states. The industry is responsible for \$887 billion in consumer spending and directly supports 5.2 million jobs across the U.S. National parks in particular received 327.5 million visits in 2019, which generated \$41.7 billion in economic output for state and local economies.
- Many western states are taking steps to reduce their reliance on fossil fuel revenues and capitalize on continued growth in other industries, including outdoor recreation and renewable energy.
 - The State of Colorado just adopted “sweeping” new rules that, according to industry, are “undoubtedly . . . the toughest oil and natural gas development regulations in the country.” And in New Mexico, the state recently enacted a multi-year moratorium on leasing state lands near Chaco Canyon, and is now moving forward with efforts to overhaul and strengthen state oil and gas bonding requirements.

State Specific Oil and Gas Leasing Information

Rocky Mountain Wild conducted an analysis of leasing in the Mountain West. The states included in this analysis, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, are those in the continental United States with the most federal oil and gas leases. Arizona was not included in this analysis because there are currently only three parcels leased in the state for a total of about 4,200 acres and there has not been a lease sale in Arizona since September, 2018.

The results of this analysis show that the oil and gas industry currently has millions of acres of leases where they can continue operations during this pause. In addition, in many of these states, interest in leasing has gone down significantly in the last year. This report first presents key results from the analysis for each state and is supplemented by an interactive map that shows federal oil and gas leases.

Colorado

- Over 2.4 million acres are currently leased with 1.6 million acres on lands with the highest potential for oil and gas development.
- Almost 1.4 million acres leased are not developed.

Montana

- Over 1.5 million acres are currently leased with about 671 thousand acres on lands with moderate to high potential for oil and gas development.
- Over 1 million acres leased are not developed.
- In 2019 over 86 thousand acres of leases were sold. In 2020 that number was down to less than 17 thousand acres.

Nevada

- About 883 thousand acres are currently leased with about 449 thousand acres on lands with moderate to high potential for oil and gas development.
- Over 862 thousand acres leased are not developed.
- In 2019 almost 68 thousand acres of leases were sold. In 2020 that number was down to less than 17 thousand acres.

New Mexico

- Almost 4.3 million acres are currently leased with almost 1.6 million acres on lands with the highest potential for oil and gas development.
- Over 1.1 million acres leased are not developed.
- In 2019 over 58 thousand acres of leases were sold and in 2020 over 70 thousand acres were sold. In 2021 less than 6.7 thousand acres have been proposed to be sold.

Utah

- Over 2.7 million acres are currently leased with over 1.7 million acres on lands with the highest potential for oil and gas development.
- Over 1.1 million acres leased are not developed.
- In 2019 almost 225 thousand acres of leases were sold. In 2020 that number was down to about 60 thousand acres.

Wyoming

- Over 8 million acres are currently leased with over 3 million acres on lands with moderate to high potential for oil and gas development.
- Over 5 million acres leased are not developed.
- In 2019 almost 1.2 million acres of leases were sold. In 2020 that number was down to less than 242 thousand acres.



Oil and Gas Pause Resolution Background

President Biden's Executive Order - January 27, 2021

Temporary Pause on New Oil & Gas Leasing on U.S. Federal Public Lands

Public lands are the backbone of our Western mountain communities and vital for our way of life. Over the last year as the country has navigated COVID, residents and visitors are finding solace in the outdoors more than ever before. We are thrilled with the Biden administration's forward looking [executive orders](#) that will result in bold climate action and protection for our public lands. These actions will help boost the economy as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and will move us towards a more sustainable future.

The [pause on new oil and gas leasing on federal public lands](#) was one section out of three in President Biden's executive order on January 27, 2021. By pausing oil and gas leasing for the first time in 40 years, the Biden Administration rightly recognized the federal oil and gas leasing program is fundamentally broken and must be overhauled to address the climate crisis, generate a fair return for taxpayers, respect local landowners, and support communities in the inevitable transition away from fossil fuels.

Please see below for more background on why we encourage your County/City/Town Commission/Council to adopt a resolution showing support for this pause.

Oil and Gas Leasing Pause

HITTING PAUSE ON NEW OIL AND GAS LEASING *(From the Department of Interior Fact Sheet)* -

"The Executive Order will direct the Department of the Interior to pause new oil and natural gas leasing on public lands and offshore waters, concurrent with a comprehensive review of the federal oil and gas program. The targeted pause **does not impact** existing operations or permits for valid, existing leases, which are continuing to be reviewed and approved. The order does not restrict energy activities on private or state lands, or lands that the United States holds in trust or restricted status for Tribes or individual Indians.

The President's action will provide a chance to **review** the federal oil and gas program to ensure that it serves the public interest and to **restore balance** on America's public lands and waters to benefit current and future generations. Fossil fuel extraction on public lands accounts for nearly a quarter of all U.S. [greenhouse gas emissions](#). Irresponsible leasing of public lands and waters impacts communities' access to clean air, clean water, and outdoor recreation; carves up important wildlife habitat; and threatens cultural and sacred sites. Multiple bills in Congress have been introduced in recent years to reform the outdated program, including those to better ensure the public is not shut out of land management and leasing decisions; to address the mounting cleanup and remediation costs of orphan wells scattered across the country; and to provide a fair return to taxpayers for the use of their resources."

Why Is This Pause Necessary?

- Under our [current system](#), oil and gas companies nominate public lands they want to drill, purchase oil and gas leases at obscenely low rates, easily obtain drilling permits, and pay taxpayers low and outdated royalty rates, depriving governments of much-needed revenue.
- Onshore, of the more than 26 million acres under lease to the oil and gas industry, nearly 13.9 million (or 53%) of those acres are unused and non-producing.
- The Trump administration conducted a fire sale of public lands and waters, offering more than 25 million acres onshore during the past four years, 5.6 million of which were purchased.
- This pause does not [affect current drilling or previously approved permits](#). If a project has been permitted but not started, the company is still free to move forward. The Associated Press reported that companies stockpiled thousands of permits at the end of Donald Trump's presidency to allow drilling for several years.
- A review of this nature is not unprecedented; similar reviews have occurred for the federal oil, gas, and coal programs in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Fossil fuel production on public lands [causes about a quarter](#) of U.S. greenhouse gas pollution.
- When companies go bankrupt and orphan their wells -- which is happening with great frequency right now -- taxpayers are left on the hook to clean up their mess and deal with contaminated drinking water, polluted air, and threatens wildlife habitat.
- The Land and Water Conservation Fund would not be impacted by preventing new offshore drilling. Federal energy revenues total about \$7 billion and current production revenues, without opening new areas to leasing, fully cover LWCF's \$900 million annual deposits with an additional \$3 billion a year remaining in the Treasury General Account.
- As this is a pause on new leases, community projects funded with royalties won't be impacted. Education funding should not be subject to the boom and bust cycles of the oil and gas industry. We need to diversify our economy, transition away from the boom and bust cycles of fossil fuels, and invest in good paying clean energy jobs of the future.

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