



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

New Mexico State Office  
301 Dinosaur Trail  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87508  
[www.blm.gov/new-mexico](http://www.blm.gov/new-mexico)

October 18, 2018

In Reply Refer To:  
3100 (9200)

Your Reference:  
December 2018 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease

Jeremy Nichols  
Climate & Energy Program District  
WildEarth Guardians  
516 Alto St.  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Mr. Nichols:

Thank you for interest in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) New Mexico (NM) Oklahoma Texas, and Kansas proposed December 2018 Competitive Oil and Gas Lease Sale (Lease Sale), and for communicating your desire for additional public involvement opportunities. Specifically you requested that the BLM hold three public hearings in conjunction with the Lease Sale in Santa Fe, NM, Farmington, NM, and the Tri-Chapter region of the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation (Ojo Encino, Torreon, and Counselor). At this time, we do not feel that public hearings will provide any additional issues for the BLM to consider in the National Environmental Policy Act process for the December 2018 Lease Sale.

On July 9, 2018, the BLM opened a public scoping period for the December 2018 Lease Sale. From July 9, 2018 to July 27, 2018 (the public scoping period was originally identified to close on July 20, 2018 but was extended), the BLM received comments from interested parties and the majority of the issues raised were considered for inclusion in the environmental analysis. In addition to the issues provided, the BLM received thousands of form letters opposing the December 2018 Lease Sale and requesting the BLM cancel the Lease Sale. Out of the 27 undersigned, the following 10 organizations also provided comments during this period:

- WildEarth Guardians;
- Counselor Chapter of the Navajo Nation;
- Pueblo of Sandia;
- Center for Biological Diversity;
- Chaco Alliance;
- Diné Citizens Against Ruining Our Environment;
- Pueblo Action Alliance;
- San Juan Citizens Alliance;

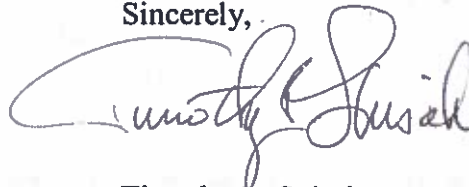
- Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter; and
- Southwest Native Cultures.

The comments that the BLM received included, but were not limited to, issues related to the Greater Chaco region, Chaco Cultural National Historic Park and impacts of oil and gas development to resource values such as cultural resources, air quality, climate change, water quantity and quality, environmental justice and socioeconomics. None of the issues raised are new issues that the BLM has not already received during public involvement opportunities and the protest periods held for past lease sales, or heard about during the public scoping meetings held for the Farmington Field Office Mancos Gallup Resource Management Plan Amendment. For these reasons, the BLM does not believe that a public hearing or meeting would result in any new, substantial issues that are not already being considered in the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Lease Sale.

The EA and unsigned Finding of No Significant Impact along with the Sale Notice for the December 2018 Lease Sale will be made available for public review on October 22, 2018. This publication initiates a 10-day protest period. During the protest period, interested parties will have an additional opportunity to provide the BLM with input regarding the proposed action and alternatives being considered in the EA. More information on how to file a protest and protest requirements in order for the protest to be considered can be found on the BLM-NM Oil and Gas Lease Sales website: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/leasing/regional-lease-sales/new-mexico>.

It is for the reasons described above that the BLM has decided not to hold any public meetings or hearings as requested.

Sincerely,



Timothy R. Spisak  
Acting State Director

cc:

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