

# SUMMIT COUNTY CITIZEN VOICE

## Conservation group challenges Nevada fracking plan



A NASA Earth Observatory map shows the dry Nevada deserts east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains

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### **BLM lease sales based on flawed, incomplete analysis, environmentalists say**

FRISCO — Conservation advocates are formally challenging a Bureau of Land Management proposal to lease lands for natural gas exploitation in north-central Nevada based in part on the federal agency's failure to require an in-depth environmental study.

The lease sale could open up more than 174,000 acres around Tonopah and Austin on 102 lease parcels. In filing the protest, the Center for Biological Diversity spelled out a laundry list of concerns about the BLM's process, highlighting the fact that the agency's evaluation of the proposed lease doesn't come close to addressing key environmental concerns. Instead of developing more fossil fuel resources, the emphasis in Nevada should be on renewable energy resources like wind, solar and geothermal.

"Fracking in other parts of this country has repeatedly shown the practice to be dangerous both for human health and the environment," said Rob Mrowka, a senior scientist with the Center. "It poses an imminent threat to one of Nevada's scarcest resources — water — as well as clean air and wildlife habitats. And of course it significantly adds to greenhouse gas pollution and exacerbates climate change." Nevada shouldn't be rushing ahead with fracking while other states are considering stricter controls and even potential bans, he added.

Fracking requires an enormous amount of water, which isn't exactly abundant in Nevada. In fact, it's not clear where the needed water would come from.

"The recently released National Climate Change Assessment makes it abundantly clear that the climate of the United States is already being hurt by human-induced changes and that that the situation will only get worse with time," said Mrowka. "It's human folly of the worst kind to add to the changes through more fracking, simply for the short-term economic gain of a few companies."

The Center is calling on the BLM to cancel the Nevada lease sales as part of a nationwide shift toward safer energy sources.

“While water is scarce, sunshine is abundant in Nevada,” Mrowka said. “We should be ramping up investment in clean and well-planned geothermal, distributed solar and wind facilities here, because our citizens, environment and natural heritage deserve the best.”