

September 25, 2020

Bakersfield Field Office Manager Gabriel Garcia  
Bakersfield Field Office  
Bureau of Land Management  
Attn: Oil and Gas Lease Sale  
3801 Pegasus Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93308

**RE: December 2020 Oil and Gas Lease Sale (DOI-BLM-CA-C060-2020-0120-EA)**

Dear Bakersfield Field Office Manager Gabriel Garcia:

As conservation, environmental justice, public health and community groups with hundreds of thousands of members in California, we urge you to halt the oil and gas lease sale proposed for December, 2020 in Kern County. This lease sale would be the first held in California in eight years, reversing progress for environmental and human health made since the cessation of federal oil and gas leasing in 2012. Ending the eight-year moratorium on federal oil and gas leasing in California would cause irreversible and unacceptable damage to our climate, health, and precious public lands, and should be rejected. Moreover, the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the sale is legally deficient and the BLM cannot lawfully move forward with the sale based on its inadequate, fast-track analysis.

Californians have experienced the full force of the climate emergency this summer, through unprecedented heat waves and fires that have been greatly intensified by the warming climate. Fossil fuel extraction and use is by far the largest driver of climate change, responsible for three-quarters of all greenhouse gas emissions. The world's leading scientists have warned that warming must be limited to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid the most catastrophic climate damages. There is enough oil and gas in already developed fields globally to take the world beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius if it were all extracted and burned, even assuming no further coal use. Selling off publicly owned oil and gas rights for new development is flatly incompatible with meeting our climate goals.

Leasing more land for oil and gas development near communities of color that are already disproportionately harmed by air and water pollution also perpetuates environmental racism. Kern County is one of the most heavily polluted counties in the nation and exposure to water and air pollution associated with oil drilling and fracking is shown to pose serious, and sometimes deadly, health harms. These harms are compounded by COVID-19 which attacks respiratory health. The disproportionate pollution of frontline communities is an example of environmental injustice that new, nearby lease sales will only exacerbate.

Some of the parcels up for sale are also right next to, or within, treasured landscapes and important wildlife habitat like the Carrizo Plain National Monument and Wind Wolves Preserve, as well as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This ACEC is supposed to provide habitat for a suite of listed species in the San Joaquin Valley. Oil and gas development

on these parcels would pose unacceptable dangers to wildlife, including the California condor and San Joaquin kit fox.

The EA for the lease sale fails to properly analyze all of these harms, as has been detailed in technical comments submitted separately. BLM cannot lawfully proceed without fully analyzing all of the environmental risks in a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), as opposed to this insufficient EA. When BLM proposed opening these areas to new leasing in its most recent Resource Management Plan (RMP), over 90,000 Californians wrote to BLM to convey their overwhelming opposition to any new drilling or fracking on our public lands. The BLM's RMP and associated environmental review is now being challenged in lawsuits brought by public health advocates, environmental and outdoor recreation groups, as well as the State of California. Clearly the scientific, public, and political controversy over ending eight years of protection from oil and gas leasing also requires preparation of an EIS for this and any other proposed lease sales.

For all these reasons, we urge the BLM to cancel the proposed lease sale in Kern County.

Sincerely,

Shoshana Wechsler, 350 Bay Area

Emily Williams, 350 Santa Barbara

Matt Leonard, 350.org

Jonathan Zeichner, A Place Called Home

Fernando Serrano, Alianza Ecologista del Condado de Tulare

Barbara Sattler, Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Pedro Hernandez, Audubon California

Lisette van Vliet, Breast Cancer Prevention Partners

Ian Ware, CA Youth Vs Big Oil

Susan Jordan, California Coastal Protection Network

Jane Williams, California Communities Against Toxics

Neena Mohan, California Environmental Justice Alliance

Allis Druffel IHM, California Interfaith Power & Light

Andrew Escamilla, California League of Conservation Voters

André Sanchez, California Wilderness Coalition (CalWild)

Michael J. Painter, Californians for Western Wilderness

Handri Handoyo, CALPIRG Students

Kassie Siegel, Center for Biological Diversity  
Linda Rudolph, Center for Climate Change and Health  
Daniel Ress, Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment  
Kevin Hamilton, Central California Asthma Collaborative  
Nayamin Martinez, Central California Environmental Justice Network  
Steven Marx, Central Coast Ag Network dba City Farm SLO  
Catherine Garoupa White, Central Valley Air Quality Coalition  
Daniel O'Connell, Central Valley Partnership  
Jennifer Clary, Clean Water Action  
Matthew Vasilakis, Climate Action Campaign  
RL Miller, Climate Hawks Vote  
Justine Massey, Community Water Center  
David Feinman, Conservation Lands Foundation  
Don Chartrand, Creek Lands Conservation  
Christy Zamani, Day One  
Mary Gutierrez, Earth Ethics, Inc  
Michelle Ghafar, Earthjustice  
Grant Helete, ECOSLO - Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo  
Nancy Halpern Ibrahim, Esperanza Community Housing Corporation  
Virginia Nixon, Fearless Grandmothers  
Alexandra Nagy, Food & Water Watch  
Elena Salinas O'Toole, Food and Water Action Santa Barbara  
Brook Lenker, FracTracker Alliance  
Ronald Martin, Fresnans against Fracking  
Josefa Vega, Fresno Democratic Socialists of America  
Michael Wellborn, Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks  
Nicole Ghio, Friends of the Earth  
Kyle Hamada, Friends of the Inyo

Caroline Henderson, Greenpeace USA  
Shanna Edberg, Hispanic Access Foundation  
Linda Bassett, LA Democratic Party Central County Committee AD63  
Emma De La Rosa, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability  
Carolyn Chaney, Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Ministry  
Rebecca August, Los Padres Forest Watch  
Dwight Ewing, Merced Bicycle Coalition  
Samuel Molina, Mi Familia Vota  
Vanessa Terán, Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project  
Douglas Tait, Morro Coast Audubon Society  
Linda Hutchins-Knowles, Mothers Out Front  
Nada Culver, National Audubon Society  
Mark Rose, National Parks Conservation Association  
Ann Alexander, Natural Resources Defense Council  
Belinda Faustinos, Nature for All  
Susan Harvey, North County Watch  
David Monkawa, Progressive Asian Network for Action  
Benjamin Eichert, Romero Institute  
David Braun, Rootskeeper  
Rebecca August, Safe Energy Now, North County  
Jill ZamEk, San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace  
Pia Piscitelli, San Diego 350  
Grace Feldmann, Santa Barbara Standing Rock Coalition  
Heather Howell, Santa Lucia Chapter Sierra Club  
Ara Marderosian, Sequoia ForestKeeper®  
Jenny Binstock, Sierra Club  
Jonathan Ullman, Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter  
Irene Cooke, Society of Fearless Grandmothers - Santa Barbara

Wilder Zeiser, Stand.earth  
Janet Johnson, Sunflower Alliance  
Alex Montes, Sunrise Bay Area  
Esmé Hassell-Thean, Sunrise Davis  
Riddhi Patel, Sunrise Kern County  
Gavin Garza, Sunrise Movement Fresno  
Nicole Levin, Sunrise Movement Los Angeles  
Carmen Bouquin, Sunrise Movement San Luis Obispo  
Jennifer Savage, Surfrider Foundation  
Anna Cummins, The 5 Gyres Institute  
Ellie Cohen, The Climate Center  
Frazier Haney, The Wildlands Conservancy  
Kate Hoit, Vet Voice Foundation  
Genevieve Gale, Young Fresnans for the Environment  
Lizbeth Ibarra, Youth vs Apocalypse