

Opposition to Leasing California's Public Lands and Mineral Estate for Fracking and Oil and Gas Drilling

September 7, 2018

Dear Secretary Zinke,

As environmental, public health and community groups with hundreds of thousands of members in California, we call on you to continue the moratorium on leasing California's federal public lands to oil companies that has been in effect for over five years. We are alarmed that under your watch, the Bureau of Land Management has taken the first step in the process to open more than a million acres of public land and mineral estate in California to oil drilling and fracking.

Like a household budget, the planet has a fossil fuel budget, and it has been overspent. There is enough oil, gas and coal in already open, producing fields globally to take us far beyond the Paris climate targets. It defies reason for the federal government to continue auctioning off publicly-owned lands and fossil fuels for development. Now more than ever, we must keep fossil fuels in the ground.

Fracking presents unacceptable risks to our health and safety. The Bureau of Land Management estimates that up to 90 percent of new wells on federal lands are fracked. A 2015 report from the California Council on Science and Technology concluded that fracking in California happens at unusually shallow depths, dangerously close to underground drinking water supplies, with unusually high concentrations of chemicals, including substances dangerous to human health and the environment.

Allowing fracking and dangerous oil drilling would put the state's most iconic landscapes at risk. It threatens not only lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, but risks polluting the air and water of other federal and private lands in the region, including the Sequoia National Forest, Los Padres National Forest and California's beautiful coastlines.

In the name of our health, wildlife and climate, we demand that you reverse your plans to sell off California's beautiful and precious public lands to Big Oil. Do not open the Bureau of Land Management Bakersfield Planning Area for fossil fuel leasing.

Sincerely,

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