

TRUMP FRACKING FRENZY



DESTROYING OUR PUBLIC LANDS, LOCKING IN CLIMATE POLLUTION

The Trump administration's reckless fracking agenda is endangering public health and wildlife, destroying public lands and locking in massive carbon pollution that our climate can't afford. The administration is committing more public lands to fossil fuel development by slashing environmental reviews and repealing rules that protect public participation, science-based decision making, wildlife and the environment. As scientists urge unprecedented action to cut climate pollution in the next decade, Trump is racing in the opposite direction.

These changes are upending communities and putting a growing number of species at risk, from greater sage-grouse to the Colorado pikeminnow. They're threatening precious groundwater sources and fueling more [deadly ozone](#) pollution in rural communities, increasing the risk of birth defects, asthma and cancer.

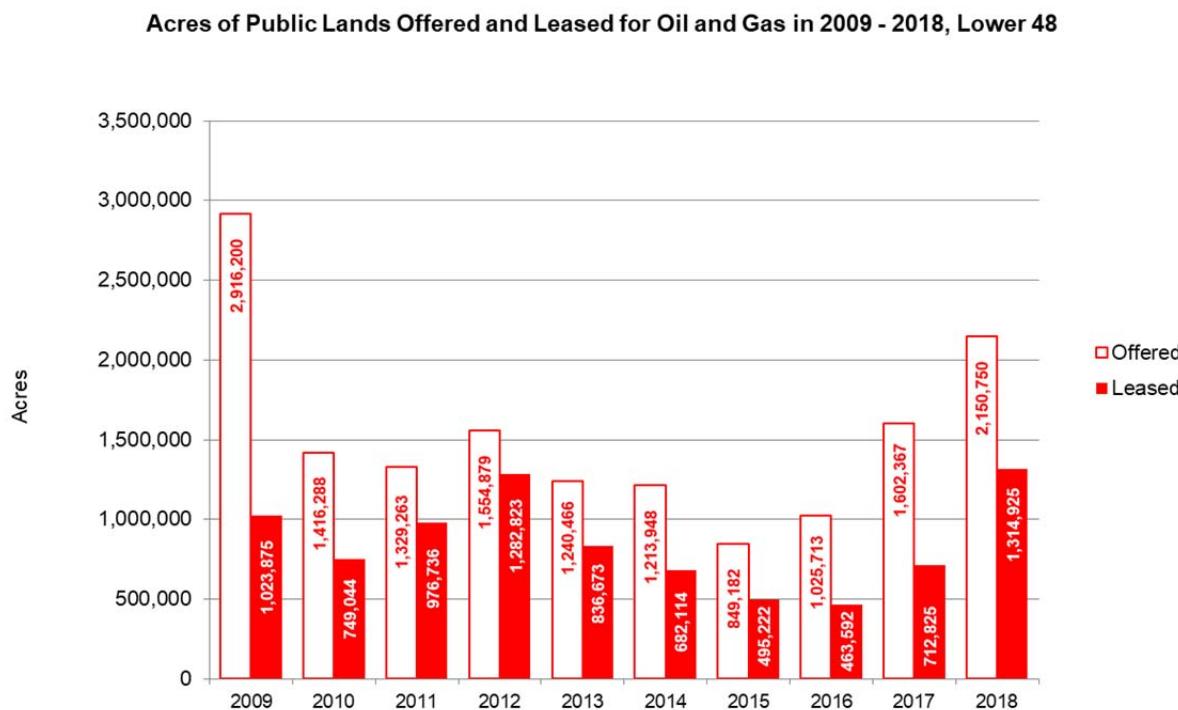
The Center for Biological Diversity analyzed federal oil and gas leasing data from the lower 48 states since Trump took office and found:

- More than 5 million acres of public land have been put up for auction and more than 1.3 million acres were leased in 2018 — the most in a decade;
- Oil and gas leases offered contained more than 1 billion tons — an entire *gigaton* — of potential greenhouse-gas pollution, and the pollution potential in sold leases quadrupled from 2017 to 2018;
- Wyoming and Utah lead the hardest-hit states, with more than 2 million acres leased for drilling and fracking;
- Reliance on a troubling regulatory scheme that short-changes environmental review and hides information from the public before lands are leased;
- Threats to public health, wildlife and endangered species, clean water and recreational areas resulted from new leases and the fracking development that could ensue.



Ramping Up Oil and Gas Leasing in the Lower 48

The Trump administration has reversed the past decade's trend of declining oil and gas leasing, offering nearly 5 million acres of public land — four times the size of Grand Canyon National Park — for drilling and fracking. In 2018, the Bureau of Land Management offered 2.1 million acres in the lower 48 states and 1.3 million acres of that were leased — more than any year in the past decade.¹ 2019 is on pace to surpass that, with 1.3 million acres already on the auction block. Lands that don't receive bids at auction remain available for another two years at the rock-bottom price of \$1.50 per acre.



One Gigaton of Potential Climate Pollution

Trump's oil and gas leasing frenzy is locking in more potential greenhouse gas pollution. By giving development rights to industry, each new lease means more future pollution. Once developed, drilling and fracking rigs can keep churning out pollution for decades.

From 2017 through the first quarter of 2019, Trump offered oil and gas leases in the lower 48 states that contain more than one billion tons — an entire *gigaton* — of potential greenhouse gas pollution. Almost 90 percent of that — nearly 900 million tons — was leased. That's the equivalent annual emissions from 228 coal-fired power plants.² From 2017 to 2018, the potential

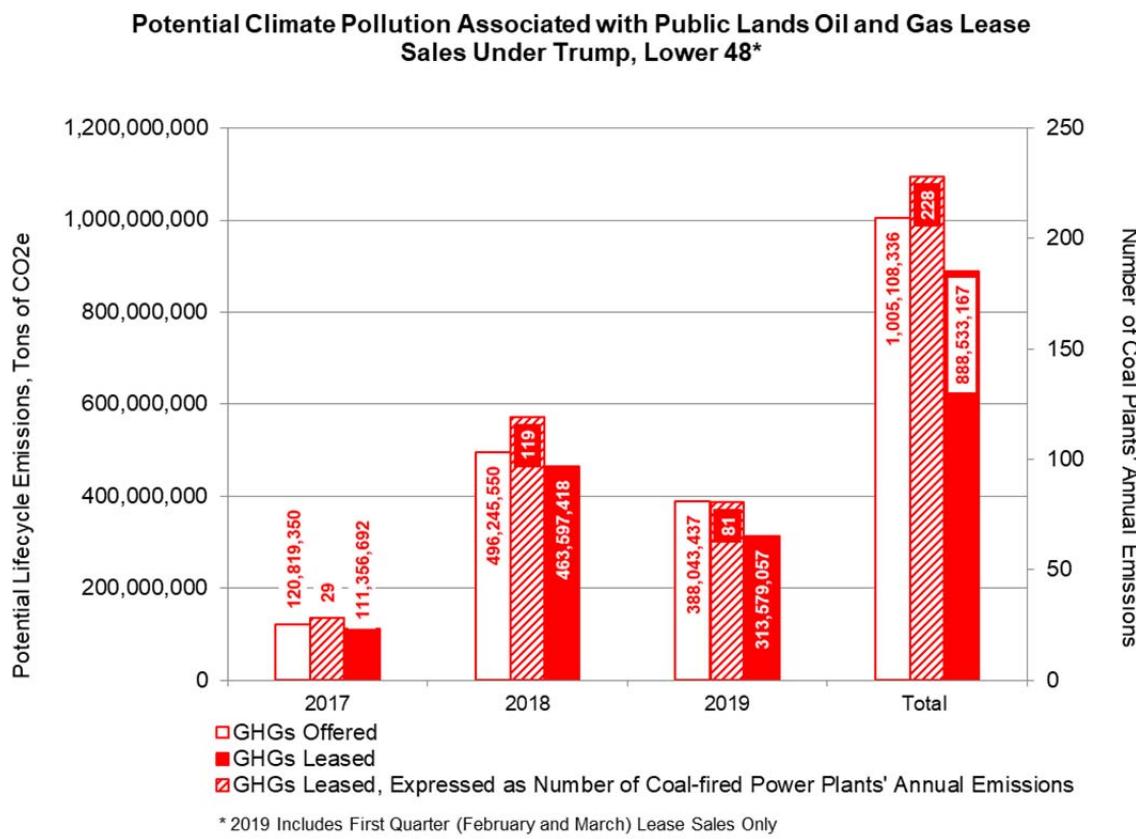
¹ 2018 and 2019 statistics were generated in GIS using BLM data provided for its lease sales. Other data for lower 48 acres offered and receiving bids were calculated by subtracting acres offered and receiving bids in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPRA) from acres offered in all BLM lease sales for each calendar year. These data were obtained from BLM oil and gas leasing statistics. See:

https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/Table%20_11_Acreage_Offered_at_Competitive_Lessee_Sale_Auctions_Since_January_1_2009.pdf

https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/uploads/Oil_Gas_Alaska_NPRA_LeaseSale_Statistics_1999toPresent.pdf

² We used EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator to calculate the number of coal-fired power plants' annual emissions equivalent to the potential greenhouse gas pollution associated with BLM oil and gas lease sale volumes. See: <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>

greenhouse gas pollution in sold leases quadrupled from 111 million tons to more than 463 million tons. In the first quarter of 2019, Trump leased an additional 314 million tons of potential GHG.³ The average volume of greenhouse gas pollution associated with these leases more than doubled from 2017 to 2018, from 143 tons per acre to about 353 tons per acre, because the acres leased contained more oil and gas.



States Hit Hardest

Since 2017, nearly 3 million acres and hundreds of millions of tons of potential climate pollution have been locked into new oil and gas leases in the lower 48 states. Wyoming accounts for a majority, with more than 1.6 million acres containing 761 million tons of greenhouse gas pollution leased under the Trump administration. Several other Western states saw more than 100,000 acres and tens of millions of tons of potential climate pollution leased for fracking and drilling. Climate pollution, no matter where it comes from, harms us all.

BLM Region	Offered Acres	Leased Acres	Offered GHGs	Leased GHGs
Arizona	4,278	3,093	4,993	745
Colorado	192,069	170,851	28,617,994	20,429,963
Eastern States	10,942	9,428	421,362	391,481
Montana	410,371	223,075	14,503,904	10,220,757

³ We calculated oil and gas volumes for each year by clipping federal EPCA Phase III oil and gas volume data by BLM oil and gas lease parcels boundaries in a GIS. We calculated potential lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions associated with those oil and gas volumes using a carbon calculator developed by EcoShift located here: <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/climatepollutioncalculator/>

Nevada	1,417,343	141,312	13,321,778	1,492,315
New Mexico	178,533	178,242	38,980,515	38,970,051
Utah	777,683	542,298	62,241,345	55,919,522
Wyoming	2,039,515	1,667,704	847,016,444	761,108,334
Total	5,030,735	2,936,004	1,005,108,336	888,533,167

Table 1. Acres and potential tons of CO₂e offered leased by BLM region, 2017 through the first quarter of 2019.⁴

Fossil Fuel Industry Takes Charge of Public Lands

In January 2018 the Bureau of Land Management released an [instruction memorandum](#) that radically weakened the policy governing oil and gas leasing across 245 million acres of public land and the nation's 700 million-acre federal mineral estate.

This dangerous rollback threatens public lands, wildlife, human health and the climate while promising more litigation by curtailing public participation and environmental analysis before lands are leased.

Trump's oil and gas leasing directive:

- Pushes the BLM to use regulatory shortcuts (called Determinations of NEPA Adequacy) for planning oil and gas lease sales, cutting out public participation, site-specific environmental review, analysis of alternatives and disclosure of harms — all required under federal law;
- Slashes the time the public has to raise objections to lease sale decisions to just 10 days from 30 days;
- Eliminates the geographically rotating quarterly lease schedule designed to allow BLM offices sufficient time to review nominated parcels in particular areas;
- Eliminates new “master leasing plans,” which guide the location of leases to reduce harm to endangered species, wildlife habitat, recreational lands, air, water and communities;
- Instructs BLM managers to include industry-nominated land in lease sales and makes it harder for managers to remove land from lease sales to protect sensitive resources.

In September, a federal judge in Idaho [halted](#) implementation of the Trump directive on 67 million acres of greater sage-grouse habitat in 11 Western states. U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald E. Bush prohibited the BLM from enforcing the policy changes pending a final ruling, saying there was “significant evidence” that the BLM “made an intentional decision” to limit public involvement. BLM has continued to severely limit public input and environmental review on public lands outside of greater sage-grouse habitat.

⁴ We calculated lease sale acres in a GIS using BLM lease parcel boundary GIS data. We calculated oil and gas volumes for each year by clipping federal EPCA Phase III oil and gas volume data by BLM lease parcels boundaries in a GIS. We calculated potential lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions associated with those oil and gas volumes using a carbon calculator developed by EcoShift located here: <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/climatepollutioncalculator/>

Other Trump regulatory rollbacks, including eliminating even the modest Obama-era safeguards for fracking and methane waste on public lands, mean that drilling and fracking on these new leases will occur with less oversight and pollution control.

What It Means for Public Lands

- Puts More Sensitive Lands at Risk: Trump is offering more public land for drilling and fracking, including sensitive wildlife habitat, pristine landscapes, recreational lands and lands next to national parks and monuments, including Chaco Culture National Historical Park in New Mexico and Canyons of the Ancients in Colorado.
- Locks in More Climate Pollution: Trump's drilling and fracking rush is sharply increasing the volumes of oil, gas and associated greenhouse gas pollution that are locked into leasing contracts with industry. Once developed, those leases can last for decades, flooding markets and subverting meaningful efforts to address climate change.
- Cuts the Public Out of Public Lands: Even as more sensitive lands and climate pollution are put on the auction block, the public is excluded from the decision-making process. Trump's policies have eliminated opportunities to comment on lease sales and cut 30-day protest periods to a mere 10 days. This makes it far more difficult for local communities to learn of proposed lease auctions and make the BLM aware of potential harm to public health, recreation, water quality and wildlife.
- Provokes More Lawsuits: Shirked environmental reviews and cutting the public out of decision-making will result in more sensitive land being leased, more dangerous carbon pollution and fewer opportunities to resolve conflicts administratively, before the BLM finds itself in front of a judge.
- Shows New Federal Fossil Fuel Leasing Should End: Trump is committing millions of acres to future development, which will unleash hundreds of millions of tons of carbon pollution. A future president should heed scientists' warnings for "unprecedented" action in the next decade and end new federal fossil fuel leasing. That would make public lands part of the climate solution instead of the climate problem.