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DAPL and Other Protests Justify BLM's Move To Online Lease Sales ^[1]

DENVER - Western Energy Alliance supports the Bureau of Land Management's plans to hold online sales for oil and natural gas leases on public lands, especially in light of protests of the Dakota Access Pipeline, threats to workers, and sabotage of other pipelines. BLM [announced](#) ^[2] earlier today it will hold sales for Colorado, Montana, Utah and the Eastern States in December, moving back sales previously planned for November.

"The extremism we see from anti-oil and gas protesters, such as the [vandalism and sabotage in North Dakota](#) ^[3], is cause enough for BLM to hold leases sales online," said Kathleen Sgamma, vice president of government and public affairs at the Alliance. "[Keep-It-in-the-Ground protests](#) ^[4] of BLM lease sales are another reason. BLM Director Neil Kornze perceptively [equated protesters' threatening actions](#) ^[5] to armed militiamen, and since his testimony their actions have only grown more dangerous.

"We strongly support BLM rescheduling next month's lease sales and moving them online since it will increase safety and remove a platform for radical protesters who want to stop American energy production. Online auctions enable BLM to meet its obligations under existing law, reduce administrative costs, and eliminate disruptions from Keep-It-in-the-Ground protesters. The public still has the opportunity to participate at multiple points in the leasing process, but the actual sale will use up-to-date technology."

The Mineral Leasing Act requires quarterly sales in all states with federal oil and natural gas resources. [Western Energy Alliance has sued](#) ^[6] BLM over its failure to meet this basic requirement several times in the last few years. Western Energy Alliance also [encouraged](#) ^[7] BLM to hold auctions online following several lease cancelations earlier this year and last year.

BLM successfully held its first online auction on September 20th, selling fourteen parcels of 4,214 acres in Kentucky and Mississippi. The agency generated \$80,223, which is split between the federal government and the two states.

Additional information about oil and natural gas [leasing on public lands](#) ^[8], the benefits of [online auctions](#) ^[9], and the [Keep-It-in-the-Ground movement](#) ^[4] is available on the Alliance's website.

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