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Industry Comments on BLM's Retroactive Cancellation of Natural Gas Leases in Western Colorado ^[1]

DENVER – The West Slope Colorado Oil and Gas Association (WSCOGA) and Western Energy Alliance issued the following statements in reaction to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) announcement of the Record of Decision regarding oil and natural gas leases in the White River National Forest of Colorado, including cancellation of 25 of 65 leases.

"Retroactive cancellation of natural gas leases ten years after the lease contracts were signed is the final chapter of this Administration's punitive energy policy and assault on natural gas development on federal lands in western Colorado," said David Ludlam, executive director of WSCOGA. "Despite the common knowledge that the decision to breach the contracts was made by the Obama Administration years ago, the final cancellation announcement remains shocking to those who conduct productive, multiple-use operations on federal lands. The outcome of this month's election broadens the range of possible responses our industry may have in relation to this unprecedented breach of contract. We will remain in close contact with our congressional delegation as well as the incoming Trump administration to determine the best course of action to right a major wrong perpetuated in the final hours of a president whose tenure is marked by an agenda to eliminate production of oil and natural gas on federally managed lands."

"We're seeing a flurry of decisions at the midnight hour from an administration that was just waiting until after an election from which it expected to win a third term," said Kathleen Sgamma, vice president of government and public affairs for Western Energy Alliance. "From a venting and flaring rule that completely exceeds BLM's authority to the cancellation of valid property rights, the overreach knows no bounds. We look forward to a Trump Administration that is not out to actively stop responsible development of American oil and natural gas, and that honors decade-old contracts. BLM is willfully moving forward with a plan to cut off access to the Mancos Shale formation, which the U.S. Geological Survey just assessed as the second largest natural gas resource in the country. Neither facts nor basic regard for the law are getting in the way of finalizing a political decision that denies jobs and economic opportunity on the West Slope in favor of NIMBYism."

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About the Associations

The West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association's mission is to foster and promote the beneficial, efficient, responsible and environmentally sound development, production and use of Western Colorado oil and natural gas. The membership of West Slope Colorado Oil & Gas Association is committed to enhancing oil and gas production in Western Colorado while also enhancing the communities where we work, live and raise our families.

Western Energy Alliance, founded in 1974 as the Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States, is a non-profit trade association representing more than 300 companies engaged in all aspects of environmentally responsible exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the West. More information about Western Energy Alliance is available at www.westernenergyalliance.org ^[2].

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