

News Release



Western Energy Alliance
410 17th Street, Ste. 700
Denver, CO 80202

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Contact: Jon Haubert
(303) 623-0987
jhaubert@westernenergyalliance.org

Montana BLM Leasing Analysis Shows No Impact on Climate Change *Jobs and economic activity delayed in vain*

(DENVER)- A frivolous lawsuit filed by environmental groups on the basis of climate change compelled BLM to conduct redundant environmental analysis, and delay job creation and economic activity in Montana and North and South Dakota. Western Energy Alliance (formerly IPAMS) submitted comments today on the Montana Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) environmental assessments (EA) for leases delayed by the lawsuit.

"The environmental analysis completed by BLM shows that even a high estimation of all federal oil and gas emissions in Montana and North and South Dakota represents a negligible amount of greenhouse gases – just 0.022% of the US total," said Kathleen Sgamma, Western Energy Alliance's Director of Government Affairs. "BLM was not able to quantify the miniscule fraction of that tiny percentage for the 224 leases in question. Despite that completely insignificant impact, environmental groups compelled BLM to delay job creation, economic activity and American energy development."

"Western Energy Alliance applauds Montana BLM for completing these draft environmental assessments in a timely manner with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). We hope that BLM can finalize these EAs quickly, release all suspended leases, and put more people in Montana and the Dakotas back to work."

Background:

A lawsuit filed in 2009 by the Montana Environmental Information Center, the Oil and Gas Accountability Project of Earthworks, and Wild Earth Guardians challenged 61 oil and gas leases from sales in 2008 because BLM had not conducted climate change analysis. Western Energy Alliance intervened on behalf of BLM. A settlement agreement was signed in March 2010 between BLM and the environmental groups in which BLM agreed to suspend the 61 leases until additional environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was complete.

Subsequently, environmental groups challenged the planned April and June 2010 oil and gas lease sales on the basis of climate change, and BLM was compelled to postpone the sale of 163 leases until the EAs were complete. BLM released the draft EAs on August 12, 2010 for public comment, which ends today.

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Western Energy Alliance's analysis of the EAs found that BLM overestimates greenhouse gas emissions from federal oil and natural gas development and production by at least a factor of five. Nevertheless, BLM still arrived at the conclusions that the act of leasing does not produce any GHG emissions; it is beyond the scope of existing science to relate a specific source of greenhouse gas emission with any specific climate-related environmental effects; and all oil and gas development (not just federal) in Montana and the Dakotas represents just .12% of US greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, BLM issued a FONSI for oil and gas leasing in 2008 and 2010.

[Click here to view BLM's Analysis](#)

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About Western Energy Alliance

Western Energy Alliance, founded in 1974, is a non-profit trade association representing more than 400 independent natural gas and oil producers, service and supply companies, banking and financial institutions, industry consultants, and their 480,000 employees who are committed to environmentally responsible natural gas and oil development in the Intermountain West. More information on Western Energy Alliance and its members is available at www.westernenergyalliance.org.