



STATE OF UTAH

GARY R. HERBERT
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
84114-2220

SPENCER J. COX
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

May 30, 2017

Mr. Ed Roberson
Utah State Director
Bureau of Land Management
440 West 200 South, #500
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101

Dear Mr. Roberson,

It has come to my attention that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is making a decision on June 1 about three proposed oil and gas leases near Zion National Park and along the town boundary of Virgin. While I support a diverse economy, these particular sites are not ideal for extraction.

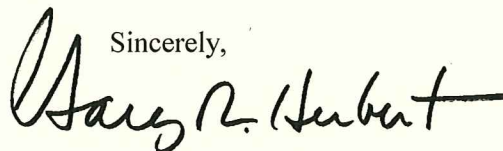
For the third consecutive year, Zion National Park has seen year-over-year double digit attendance growth. Visitors come from around the world to see the lush landscape surrounded by towering iconic sandstone cliffs. The preservation of this unique experience is important to the surrounding communities. Their economy is dependent upon recreation and tourism. We ask that you protect these parcels, protect these public lands and not open them for leasing.

I understand we are not alone in these sentiments as the following entities have asked the BLM to not lease the parcels:

- The **Washington County Commissioners** signed a resolution and voted against leasing these parcels, stating it will interfere with their economic development plans.
- The **City of Toquerville** and the **Town of Springdale** have passed resolutions against these leases.
- The **National Park Service** has expressed grave concern about these leases.
- A group of **local businesses** vocalized opposition to leasing this area—and the BLM has received approximately 40,000 comments from the general public.

Furthermore, the state and local communities are planning to improve the recreation amenities between Virgin and Springdale. If the leases move forward, it will create barriers to the development of much-needed infrastructure. Current and future investors would be rightly concerned about a threat from industrial infrastructure that would diminish the value of ventures.

In keeping with our current economic track, I support the tourism and recreation economies and not leasing the parcels that have helped define Washington County and the state of Utah.

Sincerely,


Gary R. Herbert
Governor