

April 5, 2017

Gary Torres, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Green River District Office
170 South 500 East
Vernal, UT 84078

Dear Mr. Torres,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Green River District's December 2017 Oil and Gas Lease Sale. I am the owner and operator of the Torrey Schoolhouse Bed and Breakfast in Torrey, UT. I am writing to urge the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to update its land use plan by implementing a master leasing plan for the San Rafael Swell, using a planning process similar to the one recently completed around Moab, before the upcoming December 2017 lease sale.

As you know, the San Rafael Swell is a unique and remarkable red rock landscape. Its scenic buttes, mesas and flatlands form a quiet desert playground for hiking, climbing, camping, and canyoneering. It contains thousands of discovered and undiscovered cultural and archaeological sites, including some of the best examples of prehistoric rock art in the Colorado Plateau. It also forms the eastern boundary of Capitol Reef National Park, a crown jewel of our state.

Before pursuing new leasing here, I ask that BLM look to the recently completed planning process around Moab. As a local business owner who also supports responsible energy development, Moab taught us that strong resource protections can coexist with oil, gas, and mining opportunities on public lands around Utah. In the Moab plan, BLM exemplarily balanced competing demands on the landscape. We learned it was possible to support the energy industry and protect our growing tourism and recreation economy at the same time.

Right now, the San Rafael Swell is at risk because any individual leasing or permitting decision can affect recreation, cultural, wildlife, and other resources in the area (as well as Capitol Reef National Park). Instead of this piecemeal approach, I ask that BLM address these types of conflicts up-front, in a comprehensive new plan for the area. I also ask that BLM delay new leasing in the San Rafael Swell until it fully evaluates whether this type of plan is appropriate.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Ty Markham
Torrey Schoolhouse Bed and Breakfast
Torrey, UT

Cc: Sheri Wysong
Bureau of Land Management Utah State Office
440 West 200 South, Suite 500
Salt Lake City, UT 84101.