

December 11, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell, Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Secretary Jewell –

The recent surge in the use of hydraulic fracturing on BLM lands is accompanied by existing and potential impacts to America's National Park System. The degree to which national park units can be protected from the harmful effects of fracking will depend in large part on the strength of the rules developed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Thousands of new wells are being drilled and fracked each year on lands close to national parks, and the combined impacts of this development threatens our parks, their extensive natural values, and the vibrant economies they support. Iconic parks such as Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota, Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, and Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado have already been impacted by a rapid growth in nearby development. Many other parks, including Glacier National Park, Chaco Culture National Historic Park and Arches National Monument, are under constant threat of adjacent drilling, only paused by repeated groundswells of local opposition.

The impacts to parks include dangerous air pollution, destruction of important habitat for wildlife that reside in parks, threats to water sources that flow into parks, marring of pristine viewsheds, and severe light and noise pollution.

The protection of national parks is an issue of deep concern for millions of Americans, as evidenced most recently in the hundreds of thousands who wrote to the BLM seeking stronger fracking regulations and by the millions who stood up in support of national parks during the recent government shutdown.

Though the National Park Service's comments to the BLM fracking rule have been withdrawn, it should not be forgotten that they highlighted extremely important issues. The BLM must still consider the impacts on parks and consult with the Park Service as it governs fracking near national parks.

America does not need to make a choice between the protection of our national parks and energy development, but the Department of the Interior should listen to the chorus of millions of Americans seeking assurances that our national parks and other sensitive areas will be protected. The BLM's rules for hydraulic fracturing can and should provide the public with a process to protect public lands with sensitive natural and cultural resources from harm due to fracking.

Sincerely,

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Dakota Resource Council

CC:

The Honorable Jon Jarvis
Director, National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Honorable Neil Kornze
Principal Deputy Director, Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

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