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[Photos](#)

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Advocates Urge Bureau of Land Management to Cancel Lease Sale: Stop the Sacrifice of Permian Communities

Carlsbad, N.M. – Today concerned community members and advocates from local group “Citizens Caring for the Future” delivered a [letter](#) to the BLM Carlsbad field office signed by over 200 local and national advocacy organizations, Indigenous groups, small businesses, unions, farmers, artists, musicians, and faith and political institutions urging the agency to cancel its plans to auction off over 10,000 acres of public lands administered by the New Mexico State Office to the oil and gas industry on May 25.

“The people in the Permian Basin’s health and well-being shouldn’t be up for sale. Right now individuals whose main concern is profit are putting a price on clean air, water, and land,” said Jozee Zuniga, community organizer with Citizens Caring for the Future. “This year [The American Lung Association State of the Air Report](#) named Eddy County 19 out of 25 worst counties in the US for ozone pollution. However, Eddy is still not deemed a nonattainment zone by the EPA. We are now calling for the BLM to reconsider leasing out 10,123 acres to careless oil companies that are pushing us into this state of pollution. Frontline community members do not deserve to live with flares within walking distance of their front doors and frac sites in their neighborhoods. It’s time to end suffering for New Mexicans in sacrifice zones.”

In the letter, groups pointed to recent [findings](#) by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the window for addressing disastrous climate impacts is rapidly narrowing and that drastic reductions in fossil fuels are required to avert catastrophic warming. Nearly [25%](#) of U.S. climate pollution comes from fossil fuel production on federal public lands, and oil and gas drilling in New Mexico plays a large part in that equation. Federal [data](#) shows that of the 6,430 oil and gas drilling permits that the Biden administration approved in its first two years - outpacing the Trump administration - more than half were in New Mexico’s Permian Basin.

“Not only does oil & gas production in the Permian have a profound impact on the climate, but it also greatly affects public and environmental health in the region,” said Kayley Shoup, community organizer with Citizens Caring for the Future. “Just last month Physicians for Social Responsibility released a groundbreaking [report](#) highlighting widespread use of PFAs aka “forever chemicals” in fracking operations in the region. Stating that “water risks are especially high for a Groundwater-Dependent State.” Couple that with the fact that the Carlsbad region has many fragile Karst aquifers, and you have a recipe for disaster. I fear we have no idea just how contaminated our water, land and therefore our bodies may be by these highly toxic and health harming chemicals.” ”

Since 2016, Indigenous, environmental, and social justice organizations have [delivered millions](#) of public comments challenging Bureau of Land Management lease sales in New Mexico, but the agency continues to lease more lands for oil and gas extraction, putting clean air, clean water, healthy lands, and communities at risk. Advocates urge that the Bureau finally take this resounding public protest to heart, cancel the upcoming oil and gas lease sale and stop leasing public and ancestral lands for extraction.

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