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GRAND JCT., CO

November 12th, 2013

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Bureau of Land Management
2815 H Road
Grand Junction, CO 81506

RE: Northwest Colorado Greater Sage Grouse Draft LUPA/EIS

Dear BLM staff

In reviewing the sage grouse EIS and alternatives for the RMP, I detected a strong bias against oil and gas development. In several places throughout the document, oil and gas is identified as a particular threat to sage grouse habitat; but no evidence is offered at any point to substantiate that claim.

Further, many of the stipulations and regulatory measures recommended by your staff – in all of the action alternatives – are directed against oil and gas operations specifically.

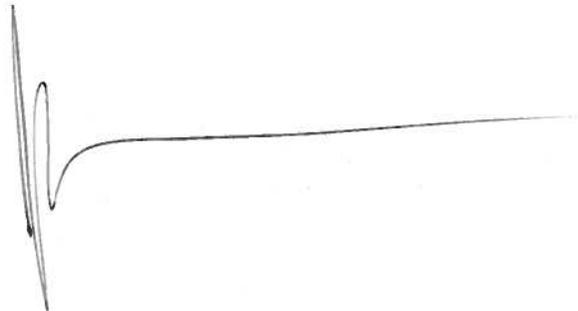
In the Preferred Alternative, you recommend the establishment of four-mile No-Surface-Occupancy zones around active and potential sage grouse lekking sites, for fluid minerals development activity. This is an overzealous measure in two ways: first, a four-mile buffer zone is, quite frankly, ridiculous, and nowhere have I seen any research that supports giving that wide a berth to a lekking site. Second, this is a stipulation applied singularly to oil and gas operations. There is simply no demonstrable reason why this particular industry needs to be singled out for special measures. If your office can justify this action, please do immediately.

It bothers me that such an important and wide-ranging effort as this was undertaken without the necessary scientific legwork done first. Even more troubling is the thought that this enterprise was approached with an agenda to punish or suppress certain industries that are not in favor with your agency and its parent administration currently.

As I am confident that the BLM is above such purely political considerations, I trust that this EIS will be revisited in short order, and the various shortcomings corrected.

Signed,

Justin Hemmer
2263 Logos Ct. #A
Grand Junction, CO 81505

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a vertical line that loops back to the left, followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right.