

Dear Director Stone-Manning,

Thank you for proposing long-overdue reforms to oil and gas leasing on public lands. The current system threatens wildlife, public lands and waters, and all who hunt, fish and recreate on public lands. It is also unfair to American taxpayers.

I'm especially supportive of the proposal to increase bonding rates to ensure that oil and gas companies are responsible for cleaning up the messes they create. The current system has allowed companies to leave behind thousands of abandoned wells that are leaking toxins into our air, water, and public lands – leaving taxpayers to pay for the cleanup. It's long past time to ensure that oil and gas companies pay for the cleanup costs for current and future development.

I also applaud the Bureau of Land Management's inclusion of screening criteria that would direct staff to avoid leasing lands that are important to wildlife, contain valuable cultural and recreational resources, and have low potential for development. We urge the agency to implement this policy in a way that prioritizes and protects public lands' diverse uses and resources.

In addition, I thank the administration for implementing the onshore oil and gas reforms that were included in recent legislation, including the increase of fees for the privilege of developing oil and gas on public lands and the termination of the practice of noncompetitive leasing, which previously gave away public lands for as little as \$1.50 an acre.

Finally, I am grateful that the Biden Administration is increasing opportunities for people to give their opinion on oil and gas leases. The proposed rule guarantees at least 30-day comment periods at multiple stages of the leasing process.

I am counting on you to finalize this rule with the strongest reforms possible – as soon as possible– to support wildlife, safeguard our lands and waters, protect taxpayers, and ensure that our public lands are better managed for the enjoyment of all.