

Governor Gary R. Herbert  
350 North State Street, Suite 200  
PO Box 142220  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2220

January 29, 2020

We are concerned about a BLM proposed oil and gas leases of two parcels in the Sand Flats area above Moab. These parcels are being considered for a June 9, 2020 Lease Sale. Parts of both of these parcels lie directly above Moab's sole source aquifer. The Environmental Protection Agency reserves the sole source aquifer designation for an aquifer that supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water for its service area and there must be no reasonably available alternative drinking water sources should the aquifer become contaminated. Additionally, one of two these parcels overlaps part of Moab City's Drinking Water Source Protection Zone for Skakel Spring, as designated by the State of Utah.

This water source is the lifeblood of Moab/Spanish Valley—the reason early Mormon settlers found the region so appealing and the reason that this community (Moab/Spanish Valley) contains more than 90 per cent of the residents of Grand County. This aquifer is central to the economy and livability of the Moab/Spanish Valley area. The EPA notes that among the major threats to the Glen Canyon sole source aquifer are: "Petroleum, mineral exploration, and geophysical drilling."

It could be asked what an oil and gas lease in the Moab watershed has to do with the residents in Castle Valley, since Castle Valley has its own watershed that is separate from the one that feeds Moab/Spanish Valley. For our residents, Moab is the commercial center of Grand County and the only City in the County. We depend on Moab for shopping, repairs, hospital services, dentist, optometrists, employment, et cetera. The health of vitality of Moab has a great impact on our citizens. Additionally, we have our own EPA designated sole source aquifer (one of the three designated sole source aquifers in Utah). The BLM land overlying our own sole source aquifer is categorized as No Surface Occupancy, just like the land in Sand Flats that is proposed for lease. Oil and gas leases on such lands set a very poor precedent, not only for the sole source aquifer in Moab, but also for the sole source aquifer in Castle Valley.

The proposed BLM leases in Sand Flats pose a serious threat to Moab's drinking water supply which in turn affects the citizens in Castle Valley. We are asking you to request that the BLM withdraw these parcels from their June 9, 2020 Lease Sale docket before the comment period for an Environmental Assessment (EA) of these parcels begins near the end of this February.

Sincerely,

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Jazmine Duncan, Mayor Town of Castle Valley

And the Town Council Members: Pamela Gibson, Tory Hill, Harry Holland and Robert O'Brien.