

**GRAND COUNTY, UTAH
RESOLUTION NO. 3202 (2020)**

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT'S
PRELIMINARY OIL AND GAS LEASE PARCELS 11 AND 12**

WHEREAS, the Sole Source Aquifer (“SSA”) Protection Program is authorized by Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. § 300 *et seq.*) and requires protection of drinking water systems that are the sole or principal drinking water source of an area and which, if contaminated, would create a significant hazard to public health;

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) defines a sole or principal source aquifer as one which supplies at least 50% of the drinking water consumed in the area overlying the aquifer;

WHEREAS, in 2002, the EPA designated the Glen Canyon Aquifer System and the immediately adjacent recharge areas (“Glen Canyon SSA”) as the sole source aquifer for Grand County, *see* 67 FR 736;

WHEREAS, this means that Grand County has no alternative drinking water source(s) which could physically, legally, and economically supply all those who depend on the Glen Canyon Aquifer for drinking water, *see* 67 FR 737;

WHEREAS, the EPA has determined that “in the Moab area, the aquifer is of very high quality, able to be used as a drinking water source with the minimal treatment required by the State of Utah. This constitutes a limited resource in this immediate area that if contaminated would create a significant hazard to public health and result in significant economic, social and environmental costs,” *see* 67 FR 737;

WHEREAS, the EPA has identified “petroleum, mineral exploration, and geophysical drilling” and “abandoned but unplugged petroleum, mineral and geophysical wells, tunnels” among the most serious potential sources of contamination of the Glen Canyon SSA, *see* 67 FR 737;

WHEREAS, similarly, the Utah Safe Drinking Water Act (Utah Statute § 19-4-101) and its related Administrative Rules (R309-600) require public water systems to protect their drinking water from contamination and adopt a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan delineating drinking water protection zones for all wells and springs that provide water for a public water system;

WHEREAS, via Ordinance 2001-10, the City of Moab adopted general Drinking Water Source Protection Plan regulations and in January 2001, the City of Moab approved the Skakel Spring Drinking Water Source Protection Plan located east and parallel to the Moab Valley;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”) is evaluating preliminary oil and gas lease parcels 11 and 12, which parcels are located in the Glen Canyon SSA, for leasing as part of its June 2020 statewide oil and gas lease sale;

WHEREAS, preliminary parcel 11 also overlaps the Skakel Spring Drinking Water Source Protection Plan;

WHEREAS, preliminary parcels 11 and 12 are also located in the Sand Flats Recreation Area (“SFRA”), a national recreation area jointly managed by the BLM and Grand County, which parcels are located approximately one (1) mile from Arches National Park and downtown Moab;

WHEREAS, each year, more than 191,000 visitors enjoy SFRA and its world-famous trails, including the Slickrock and Porcupine Rim bike trails and almost 30 miles of 4x4 trails including Fins and Things and Hell’s Revenge trails;

WHEREAS, annual visitation to SFRA produces nearly \$700,000 in direct revenue with a nearly \$7 million dollar net value to the local economy¹;

WHEREAS, for this reason, the BLM’s 2008 Moab Field Office Resource Management Plan imposes no surface occupancy (“NSO”) restrictions on mineral development of the land which comprises preliminary parcels 11 and 12;

WHEREAS, the NSO restrictions require Parcels 11 and 12 to be drilled horizontally from nearby private or state lands located west of preliminary parcels 11 and 12;

WHEREAS, all such horizontal drilling must occur in and through the Glen Canyon SSA, at great and unjustifiable risk to Grand County’s water quality and quantity, residents and businesses, and thriving economy;

WHEREAS, on April 2, 2019, via Ordinance 588, Grand County enacted a dark skies regulations to minimize light pollution for residents’ and visitors’ enjoyment of our dark night skies, to preserve and enhance astro-tourism as an economic driver, to limit detrimental public health impacts, and to support ecosystem health, especially flora and fauna that depend on dark night skies;

WHEREAS, night lights and potential flaring associated with oil and gas development preliminary parcels 11 and 12, given its close proximity to Sand Flats Recreation Area, Arches National Park, and the Moab valley is incompatible with Grand County’s Dark Skies Ordinance No. 588 and the County’s goal of protecting our dark night skies from light pollution;

WHEREAS, for these reasons, inclusion of preliminary parcels 11 and 12 in the June 2020 statewide oil and gas lease sale would constitute irresponsible natural and economic resource development in the region.

¹ Data calculated from IMPLAN economic impact model using 191,416 visitor days.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Grand County Council does hereby:

1. Oppose the lease of preliminary parcels 11 and 12;
2. Request the BLM remove these two parcels from the June 2020 statewide oil and gas lease sale;
3. Oppose any oil and gas or other mineral development or extraction activities in Grand County's Sole Source Aquifer, its associated recharge zones, or the City of Moab's Public Drinking Water Protection Zones, including Skakel Spring.

Approved by the Grand County Council in a regular public meeting on February 4, 2020 by the following vote:

Those voting aye: McGann, Paxman, Woytek, Wells, Hawks, Halliday, Clapper

Those voting nay: _____

Those absent: _____

ATTEST:

GRAND COUNTY COUNCIL



Chris Baird, Clerk/Auditor



Mary McGann, Chair