

'Keep It in the Ground' Rally in Reno Targets BLM's Oil and Gas Auction in Nevada

RENO, Nev.— Dozens of climate activists will stage a “Keep It in the Ground” rally at 8:15 a.m. Tuesday outside of the Bureau of Land Management’s oil and gas lease sale in Reno, Nevada. The BLM’s “climate auction,” as protesters have dubbed it, will allow industry to bid on leases across more than 5,000 acres in eastern Nevada, just as world leaders are gathered to broker a climate deal in Paris.

The rally is part of a rapidly growing national movement calling on President Barack Obama to define his climate legacy and “keep it in the ground” by stopping new federal oil, coal and natural gas leases on public lands and oceans — a step that would keep up to 450 billion tons of carbon pollution in the ground and provide critical international climate leadership. A major “Keep It in the Ground” protest is planned for a Dec. 10 lease sale in Washington, D.C., and similar protests have taken place in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Alaska.

What: Keep It in the Ground rally at BLM oil and gas leasing auction.

When: 8:15 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 8.

Where: BLM, Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Boulevard, Reno, Nev. 89502

Who: Nevadans Against Fracking, Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, Great Basin Climate Action Network, Great Basin Resource Watch, Center for Biological Diversity, 350.org, Rainforest Action Network and WildEarth Guardians, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, and Food and Water Watch.

Media availability: Protesters will be available for interviews before and after the rally, which will also include signs, banners, chants, speakers and an appearance from the “Grinch Who Stole Our Climate Future.”

Tuesday’s auction is being held despite earlier administrative protests ([here](#) and [here](#)) and a [letter](#) from local and national groups to Obama urging the lease sale be canceled due to runaway greenhouse gas pollution and climate crisis. The groups argue that the auction perpetuates a conflict between the administration’s climate goals and its “all of the above” energy policy by leasing federal fossil fuels that should be considered “unburnable.” The rally reinforces that federal fossil fuels — those that the president controls — should be the first taken off the table to mitigate climate damage. These sales include hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands being transferred to fossil fuel industry control.

Background The American public owns nearly 650 million acres of federal public land, and more than 1.7 billion acres of Outer Continental Shelf — and the fossil fuels beneath them. This includes federal public lands such as national parks, national forests and wildlife refuges that make up about a third of the U.S. land area — and oceans such as Alaska’s Chukchi Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and the Eastern Seaboard. These places and fossil fuels are held in trust for the public by the federal government; federal fossil fuel leasing is administered by the Department of the Interior.

The potential greenhouse gas emissions of unleased federal fossil fuels — including unleased oil and gas in Nevada — is incompatible with any U.S. share of global carbon limits to avoid dangerous

warming. By ending new leasing, the president can remove up to 450 billion tons of potential greenhouse gas emissions from the global pool.

More than 400 organizations and leaders in September called on Obama to end federal fossil fuel leasing. They included: Bill McKibben, Winona LaDuke, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Dr. Noam Chomsky, Dr. Michael Mann, Tim DeChristopher, Dr. Stuart Pimm, Dr. Michael Soule, United Auto Workers Union, Unitarian Universalist Association, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Protect Our Winters, 350.org, Center for Biological Diversity, Environment America, Friends of the Earth, Food & Water Watch, Indigenous Environmental Network, Oil Change International, Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network, REDOIL, Sierra Club, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Waterkeeper Alliance, WildEarth Guardians and hundreds of others.

According to Bureau of Land Management oil and gas statistics, the Obama administration issued new leases across more than 3.7 million acres of federal oil and gas in Nevada since 2008, more than any other state in the U.S. during that time period. As of the end of 2014, more than 3.4 million acres remained under active lease, more than all but four other states. This dwarfs the 2 million acres of BLM land that's been protected under the Wilderness Act since its passage in 1964.

On Nov. 4, Sens. Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and others introduced legislation to end new federal fossil fuel leases and cancel nonproducing federal fossil fuel leases. Days later, Obama canceled the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline, saying, "Because ultimately, if we're going to prevent large parts of this Earth from becoming not only inhospitable but uninhabitable in our lifetimes, we're going to have to keep some fossil fuels in the ground rather than burn them and release more dangerous pollution into the sky."

Download the letter urging President Obama to cancel Thursday's oil and gas lease sale [here](#).

Download the September "Keep It in the Ground" letter to Obama [here](#).

Download *Grounded: The President's Power to Fight Climate Change, Protect Public Lands by Keeping Publicly Owned Fossil Fuels in the Ground* [here](#) (this report details the legal authorities with which a president can halt new federal fossil fuel leases).

Download *The Potential Greenhouse Gas Emissions of U.S. Federal Fossil Fuels* [here](#) (this report quantifies the volume and potential greenhouse gas emissions of remaining federal fossil fuels).

Download *The Potential Greenhouse Gas Emissions* fact sheet [here](#).

Download *Public Lands, Private Profits* [here](#) (this report details the corporations profiting from climate-destroying fossil fuel extraction on public lands).

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