

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0520**

June 7, 2019

Mr. Joe Stout  
Acting State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
2800 Cottage Way Suite W1623  
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Director Stout:

I write to encourage you to halt any plans to move forward with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposal to open hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands and mineral estate along the central coast of California to new oil and gas drilling.

On Thursday, May 9, 2019, the BLM's Central Coast Field Office (CCFO) released a Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which would open more than 700,000 acres of public land across eleven counties in California, including Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz counties, to oil and gas lease sales. If this plan were to go forward, it would end a five-year moratorium on oil and gas leasing of federal land and mineral estate in California, which has been in effect since 2013.

This proposal stands in direct opposition to California's efforts to develop a clean energy economy. Today, California is leading the nation – and the world – when it comes to developing and deploying energy from renewable sources. Last year, California set a goal to source all of the state's electricity from clean power sources, including solar, wind, and hydropower, by 2045. California has also passed legislation requiring the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. This BLM proposal will threaten California's ability to continue leading efforts to meet ambitious global targets, set forth in the Paris Climate Agreement, to combat climate change.

I am also deeply concerned about the impact of this proposal on wildlife habitats on the Central Coast. As you note in the RMPA and EIS, the CCFO Planning Area is home to unique natural resources and extraordinary biodiversity. Opening public land to oil and gas development in this region would threaten many plant and animal species that thrive in these treasured places. Specifically, BLM's plan poses serious risks to more than eighty rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species known to exist in the CCFO Planning Area. These species include the San Joaquin kit fox, California condor, steelhead trout, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, California tiger salamander and California red-legged frog, which are vulnerable to habitat fragmentation and contamination from spills and leaks associated with oil and gas development. The BLM

proposal would open areas through designated critical habitat and in Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for these species.

In addition to threatening wildlife habitat, I am worried that the BLM proposal would have significant and detrimental impacts on air and water quality. I am particularly concerned that this proposal would jeopardize water quality in groundwater basins, watersheds, and National Wild and Scenic Rivers in the CCFO Planning Area.

For each of these reasons, I request that you do not proceed with the CCFO proposal to open new lands for oil and gas leasing and development, ensuring the central coast of California can continue aggressively pursuing policies that protect the state's critical natural resources and support a sustainable future.

Sincerely,



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JIMMY PANETTA  
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. Ben Blom