

**Greenpeace \* National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council \* Northern Plains Resource Council  
Powder River Basin Resource Council \* Sierra Club  
Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment \* Western Organization of Resource Councils  
WildEarth Guardians \* 350 Colorado**

December 22, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we are writing to thank you for holding the five recent ‘listening sessions’ around modernizing the federal coal program, and to urge you to take action on a number of timely issues raised during those sessions. Specifically, we urge you to reject or pause the 25 pending sales and unsold leases (listed below) totaling more than 2.5 billion tons of coal and 5 billion tons of carbon until the program has been updated. Having helped secure a successful climate agreement in Paris, it is critical that the Administration maintain progress in leaving an effective climate legacy. We ask you to now seize the opportunity to affirm that the United States is willing to lead among nations not just on the demand side, but also on the supply side.

As President Obama noted when announcing his decision to reject the Keystone XL pipeline: “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.” We hope that the listening sessions provided for the “open and honest conversation” about the federal coal program for which you laudably called. We believe such a conversation leads to the conclusion that the program must be overhauled. This means immediately closing existing royalty loopholes, raising royalty rates, establishing criteria to determine whether coal leases are in the public interest, and using the social cost of carbon to evaluate the climate impacts of any future federal coal leasing. It also means updating the rules that govern leasing to balance the nation’s energy needs with the effects of coal mining, transportation and burning on our air, land, water, wildlife and global climate. Interior should refrain from approving or processing any new leases unless and until these reforms are finalized.

The Paris climate summit led to unprecedented commitment and progress to combat climate change from leaders all around the world. We urge you to build on this momentum, seize the opportunity to take the steps outlined above, and move the federal coal program in a direction consistent with our nation’s climate objectives.

Sincerely,

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Cc: Christy Goldfuss, White House, Council on Environmental Quality  
Brian Deese, White House, Senior Advisor to the President

Pending and Unsold Leases:

Colorado: Colowyo, Elk Creek, Elk Creek LMA, Foidel Creek LMA, New Elk, Book Cliffs, GCC Energy LMA.

Montana: Decker LMA I, Decker LMA II, Rosebud LMA, Spring Creek LBA II.

Utah: Alton, Williams Draw, Greens Hollow.

Wyoming: West Antelope II, South LMA, West Antelope III, Belle Ayr West, Black Butte LMA, West Highlight Field, Bridger LMA, Haystack LBA, Rawhide LMA, North Highlight Field, Hay Creek II, Maysdorf II South.