

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3102

March 30, 2021

The Honorable Stephanie Garcia Richard
New Mexico State Land Commissioner
310 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Commissioner Richard,

I write to you today to raise concerns about the implications current federal actions taken by the Biden administration will have on state trust lands and their beneficiaries in New Mexico, specifically on oil and gas leasing and development on state trust lands. As you know, one of the first actions of the Biden administration was to implement a ban on new oil and gas leases on federal lands. On its own, this will have an extremely detrimental impact on our state's economy and general fund, but I fear these implications will be exacerbated by additional impacts on leases on lands under the management of your department.

New Mexico, like many other Western states, is a checkerboard of state, federal, tribal, and private lands. Finding the happy medium between development, recreation, and private property rights is the hallmark of effective lands management and for decades our state, for the most part, has struck an appropriate balance. That equilibrium has now been damaged by the ban on new leases on federal lands. I have had several constituents reach out to me concerned that access to their state leases, day to day operations on and the development of those leases will become increasingly difficult if the leasing moratorium on federal lands continues.

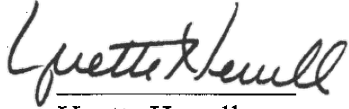
I would ask you these questions:

1. What consultation has your office had with the Department of the Interior on the implementation of the federal leasing ban?
2. What is your office doing to ensure that operations on and the development of existing and future leases on state trust lands are not adversely affected by the federal leasing ban?
3. What public outreach is your department doing to consult with producers and beneficiaries and hear their concerns about how their operations may be affected by the leasing ban?

I would also call on you to join me and use all the power at your disposal as State Land Commissioner to oppose the federal leasing ban imposed by the Biden administration. Oil and gas production employs over 100,000 people in our state and contributes revenues that make up nearly forty percent of our general fund. 94% of the earnings from the state trust lands, under your management, goes directly to support education. An attack on the oil and gas industry is an

attack on the future economic sustainability of our state and the future of our children. As you know the facts are clear, New Mexico leads the way in producing oil and gas in an environmentally conscious and sustainable way, which can continue on for decades to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Yvette Herrell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Yvette Herrell
Member of Congress