

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 20, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

We are writing in opposition to expanding oil and gas drilling on California's public lands within the Bakersfield Field Office planning area. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), released on January 12, 2026, would evaluate alternatives that would allow continued or expanded oil and gas leasing and drilling across federal lands in the region¹. We are opposed to any new drilling off California's public lands and ask that BLM continue the current effective moratorium of new oil and gas leases on federal lands, which has been in place since 2013.

Areas proposed for potential drilling in BLM's plan include public lands near the Carrizo Plain National Monument, Giant Sequoia National Monument, Los Padres National Forest, Jamala Beach—adjacent to the Dangermond Preserve—and Morro Rock². These iconic California landscapes and natural resources must be preserved, as they represent some of the state's most valuable public lands.

Our public lands are more than just open spaces, they support local economies through outdoor recreation and tourism, contributing billions of dollars in spending, jobs, and economic activity for communities that depend on visitors and the outdoor economy. According to BLM's "Valuing America's Public Lands 2024" report, public lands managed by BLM in California received 14.7 million visitors and generated approximately \$4.7 million from visitor use and special recreation permit fees³. It is essential that we preserve these iconic landscapes for future generations. New oil and gas drilling would jeopardize both their environmental and economic benefits these treasured natural resources bring to our communities.

Drilling also threatens the availability of California's groundwater—a finite resource for California. Many groundwater basins in the region have been designated as high-priority or critically overdrafted, reflecting longstanding water scarcity for the state of California. Oil and gas extraction activities, including potential hydraulic fracturing, near these aquifers carry the risk of introducing contaminants if wells, fluid handling, or wastewater systems fail.

While there is no one-size fits all solution to address all of our energy needs, California is aggressively transitioning toward clean, renewable energy and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. Already, California codified their commitment to achieving 100 percent zero-carbon electricity by 2045, accelerating the

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/01/13/2026-00467/notice-of-availability-of-the-draft-bakersfield-field-office-oil-and-gas-leasing-and-development>

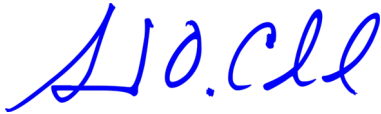
² <https://cdxapps.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-ll/public/action/eis/details?eisId=543261>

³ https://www.blm.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2024-11/BLM-Valuing-Americas-Public-Lands-2024_508.pdf?utm

deployment of renewable energy such as solar, wind, geothermal, and energy storage. In contrast, petroleum production in California has declined in recent years. Opening new public lands to oil and gas drilling is counter to our State's energy policies, which are designed to move us to a cleaner future.

Again, we reiterate our strong opposition to BLM's proposal and encourage the agency to pursue a science-based solution that protects our precious natural resources, continues to support our nation's outdoor economy, and promotes the development of clean energy.

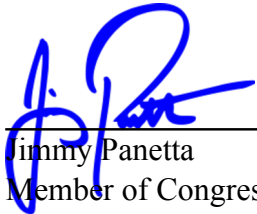
Sincerely,



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress