

## **Sierra Club Applauds Biden Climate Action on Public Lands, Waters**

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As part of promised swift action on the climate, today the Biden Administration is expected to announce it will [pause new oil and gas leasing](#) on public lands and waters, review existing leases and permits, and increase offshore wind renewable-energy development. Taken with the existing 60-day pause on fossil-fuel development, which includes an examination of the federal coal-leasing program, the order makes significant progress in addressing climate emissions from public lands.

The order also directs agencies to eliminate fossil-fuel subsidies and identify new opportunities to spur clean energy. A new task force will coordinate investments and support for communities heavily dependent on fossil fuels through the economic transition, with an eye toward turning idled fossil-fuel sites into economic generators. These are critical steps for resolving New Mexico's boom-and-bust reliance on oil and gas.

### **In response, Camilla Feibelman, Sierra Club Rio Grande director, released the following statement:**

"Already, more than 91% of the Greater Chaco public lands are leased to oil and gas drilling. This pause on new leasing doesn't heal the damage so many are already suffering, but it is the necessary and critical first step. These safeguards support Gov. Lujan Grisham's climate goals, and we look forward to New Mexico enacting more life-saving protections like reducing methane waste and pollution."

### ***Athan Manuel, director of Public Lands Protection issued the following statement.***

"We applaud the Biden administration's efforts to chart a new path for our country's lands and waters. Pausing new oil and gas leasing will improve the health of our communities, our climate and our wild places.

"In the last year, the Trump Administration leased nearly a million acres for oil and gas and gave the green light for coal mine expansions on public lands in Montana, Utah, Colorado, and North Dakota. We look forward to working with the Biden administration to secure lasting solutions that address the climate impacts of coal, oil and gas leasing and put in place long-overdue protections for communities, taxpayers, and the climate.

"Public lands can, and must, be part of the climate solution. They can play a vital role in reaching the goal of conserving 30% of lands and waters by 2030 -- levels scientists say are needed to halt the climate and extinction crises. They must also be a part of a just recovery by reinvesting in communities, tapping fossil-fuel workers to clean up past pollution, and bringing communities together to diversify economies in ways that allow everyone to benefit. "