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Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter responds to court order on leasing pause

Albuquerque, NM - On Tuesday, a federal judge [temporarily blocked](#) the Biden administration's pause on new oil and gas leasing on federal public lands pending reviewing of the Interior Department's leasing program. The court's preliminary injunction, which applies to Interior leasing nationwide, harms the needed transition from fossil-fuel pollution and efforts to address the climate emergency.

The Sierra Club joined environmental and community organizations in seeking to intervene in the case to defend the pause, citing climate, economic and public-health concerns, but that motion was denied. Sierra Club has since participated in the case as an *amicus curiae*.

In response, Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter Director Camilla Feibelman issued the following statement:

"In truth, oil and gas corporations are sitting on more than 6,000 unused permits to drill in New Mexico alone. Even industry CEOs have admitted that that's enough to drill for years even if another new lease is never issued. And another new lease never *should* be issued. The International Energy Agency said it just a few weeks ago: Additional fossil fuels are not compatible with reducing carbon pollution 50% by 2030, so they are not compatible with scientists' guidance for avoiding climate catastrophe.

"The IEA says a massive investment shift is needed, and that such investment will be an economic boost from our current fossil-fuel dependence. The Biden administration and Secretary Haaland are looking forward for our children and grandchildren. Big Oil and Gas are looking only at their own profits.

"Trump's "energy dominance" order ruled our public lands for four years without question by the courts. We hope this legally flawed ruling doesn't force the Biden administration to lease the 3% of remaining leasable federal lands in New Mexico for polluting extraction and private profit.

"It is beyond the pale that oil and gas companies believe they can force a democratically elected government to turn over public lands that are shared by all Americans so that they may profit from and pillage them."