

May 5, 2020

Mr. Al Elser
Farmington District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
6251 College Blvd., Suite A
Farmington, NM 87402

Re: Extension of Time of File Comments on the Farmington Draft RMP Amendment

Dear Mr. Elser:

COVID-19 has caused New Mexico's elected officials to focus first and foremost on matters related to maintaining the health and safety of our constituents. This demand is particularly acute in northwest New Mexico where San Juan and McKinley counties are two of the top three counties in the state for confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus. Accordingly, and consistent with recent requests from New Mexico's congressional delegation and tribal and state leaders, I am requesting an extension of at least 120 days to review and comment on the Draft Farmington Mancos-Gallup Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA).

It is critical that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) provide additional time for elected officials and the general public to engage on the Farmington RMPA process. The Farmington RMPA will have a dramatic impact on the health and well-being of the City of Aztec's residents. Because of decades of intensive oil, gas, and coal development in the San Juan Basin, our region's air quality has deteriorated dramatically. As a result, many residents in our area are suffering from the adverse effects of air pollution. This fact was highlighted recently by the American Lung Association's 2020 State of the Air report which gave San Juan County an F grade for ozone pollution.

Furthermore, in 2014 our region was found by NASA scientists to be home to the most concentrated "hot spot" of methane pollution found in the U.S. and subsequent scientific studies have largely tied that pollution problem to oil and gas infrastructure across the San Juan Basin. Given the possibility of thousands of more oil and gas wells under the Farmington RMP leading to thousands more tons of health and climate harming pollution every year, it is essential that those who are most affected by oil and gas development be given a meaningful chance to weigh-in.

Additionally, Aztec is home to Aztec Ruins National Monument, which, along with Chaco Culture National Historical Park and several sites on BLM land, is part of the Chaco Culture World Heritage Site designation. Centuries ago, a road built and maintained by the Chacoan people – the Great North Road – physically linked Chaco Canyon to Aztec Ruins. This road, like so many other cultural resources in the landscape surrounding Chaco Canyon, is now threatened by encroaching oil and gas drilling. Also at risk is the revenue that Chaco Canyon and Aztec Ruins generate for communities like mine, as thousands of

people from across the world will once again look to travel to northwestern New Mexico to visit these sites once our current health crisis is addressed.

Thank you for considering this request. Given that the comment period currently closes on May 28, I would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Victor Snover
Aztec City Commission/Mayor

Cc: Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham
Senator Tom Udall
Senator Martin Heinrich
Rep. Ben Ray Luján