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WHITE PAPER ON TRANSITIONING RURAL ECONOMIES Outdoor Recreation and the Oil and Gas Rule

Moab, Utah — Today Public Land Solutions issued a [white paper](#) detailing upcoming recreation opportunities that will be made possible by the new [Bureau of Land Management Oil and Gas Rule](#). The new BLM oil and gas rule requires real consideration of the effects of oil and gas leasing on recreation assets and represents an important step forward for rural communities. Many Western cities and towns have long depended on resource extraction like oil and gas, but today as energy markets transition away from fossil fuels, it is time to plan for future economic opportunities in public land communities.

The updates to the oil and gas leasing system in this rule will support rural community economic development now and in the future. Without this rule, parcels can be leased for oil and gas development even if the accompanying industrial activity would degrade recreation assets like trails, climbing areas, river access, and scenic vistas. Today's oil and gas leasing practices often give BLM managers little choice. The current system requires the BLM to auction off parcels for oil and gas, even when new leasing would reduce revenue opportunities from other sources. Potential losses can come from both tourism and outdoor recreation as well as business investment that was originally attracted by access to land in its natural state. Companies of all types are using quality of life in rural communities to attract and retain employees, including local residents, and this economic trend gives rural communities a real chance at a prosperous future beyond oil and gas.

Additionally, leasing marginal parcels for oil and gas is especially unwise when the lands involved have little or no development potential. The resulting leases discourage recreation investments and simultaneously waste valuable BLM management time. Single bidder auctions on low potential lands are just a bad way to manage our public lands. The United States has been leasing oil and gas parcels since before the passage of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920. Most of the desirable and potentially productive parcels have already been leased, yet only 50% have been drilled. Plus, local elected officials of all types are demanding more outdoor access and better recreation opportunities, further supporting the need for increasing consideration of recreation issues and opportunities when leasing oil and gas parcels on public lands.

While Americans continue to need and use oil and gas as we work to transition to cleaner fuels, it is more important than ever that we update our oil and gas leasing system to meet 21st century realities.

This PLS whitepaper details the many ways the new BLM oil and gas rule and its updated acknowledgement of recreation assets will make a difference to our public land communities.

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