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## **Feds Pull Remaining Texas Acres From Upcoming Fossil Fuel Auction**

### ***Second Pullback Cuts 36,000-acre Auction to 2,306 Acres***

DALLAS— Citing the need to further evaluate public feedback, the Bureau of Land Management has [withdrawn](#) all Texas acres from a federal fossil fuel auction slated for April 20 in Santa Fe, N.M. The auction, originally to include more than 36,000 acres in Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma, is now reduced to 2,306 acres. Responding to [concerns](#) raised by environmental groups and local governments about fracking impacts, the U.S. Forest Service in February [withdrew](#) 31,169 acres of national forest lands in Texas from the auction; the groups then submitted an administrative protest of the Bureau of Land Management's decision to auction the remaining 5,700 acres.

The Texas parcels recently pulled from the April auction underlie municipal water supplies that serve the heavily populated areas of Dallas-Fort Worth, Denton, Brenham and Corpus Christi. A letter from environmentalists highlighted the potential for fracking beneath Lewisville Lake, Somerville Lake, Lake Conroe and Choke Canyon Reservoir to contaminate drinking water for millions of people.

"The Bureau of Land Management was right to pull the remaining Texas parcels from this fossil fuel auction, but the reality is that no public oil and gas leases should be sold," said Taylor McKinnon with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Oil and gas drilling destroys public forests for well pads, roads and pipelines, and fracking threatens watersheds and water supplies. Fossil fuels must remain in the ground if we are to avert the worst impacts of climate change."

A [study](#) last year determined that halting new federal fossil fuel auctions on lands and offshore areas controlled by the U.S. government would keep up to 450 billion tons of greenhouse gases from polluting the atmosphere. Hundreds of people have turned out for "Keep It in the Ground" rallies opposing BLM fossil fuel auctions across the country in recent months, with several auctions being canceled.

"Thousands of Texans told BLM to stop this unwise fire sale, and they did the right thing," said Cyrus Reed, conservation director of the Sierra Club's Lone Star Chapter. "As BLM looks to the future, serious reforms are needed in its auction process so the public has an opportunity to raise concerns and insist on best practices, including keeping oil and gas in the ground."

Separately, the city of Dallas Water Utilities formally requested that 259 acres at Lewisville Lake be removed from the auction, citing concerns over the risk that fracking can cause contamination and exacerbate the dam's "known safety issues." In 2015 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that the dam is at "high risk" of failure in an extreme event.

A number of cities that rely on Lewisville Lake for their drinking water have also filed formal protests against the leasing plan, including Highland Village, Flower Mound, Denton, Irving, Lewisville and The Colony. Dallas Water and municipal officials echoed environmentalists' concerns that the public did not receive proper notice of the auction.

"Our group along with others sounded the alarm to cities whose vital water supplies could be put at risk in this sale," said Rita Beving, North Texas outreach coordinator for Clean Water Action. "There were four drinking water supply lakes at risk in Texas. Besides Lake Lewisville, Somerville Lake, Lake Conroe and Choke Canyon reservoir were also at risk, not only for water contamination but also for what potential harm could befall their dams through increased seismicity due to drilling. We are very pleased with the outcome and are grateful to all the cities, government and environmental organizations who worked with us to make this happen."

Download the Bureau of Land Management's recent parcel [withdrawal](#).

Download the Forest Service's April's [withdrawal of consent](#).

Download groups' earlier [letter of concern](#) to federal agencies.

Download groups' [protest](#) of the Bureau of Land Management's decision to auction fossil fuels here.