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Longmont council adds its support to letter that seeks environmental action by Biden, Congress

The Mountain Pact in a letter urges the Biden administration and the new Congress to prioritize adopting reforms that will reverse the devastating impacts the “energy dominance” agenda has had on Western mountain communities over the past four years.

Jan 14, 2021 11:00 AM By: Monte Whaley

Longmont City Council Tuesday night unanimously agreed to support a letter from an advocacy group to the new Biden administration, asking the president to take action on several environmental measures, including halting new oil and gas leases on public lands.

The [letter](#), which drew no comments from council, is from [The Mountain Pact](#), a nonprofit organization that aims to protect mountain towns from global warming and exploitation of public lands, according to its website. The letter lists signatories from several cities and counties in the Intermountain West.

Councilmember Marcia Martin is listed on the letter and asked council to back the letter’s contents.

The letter states the country’s public lands have provided a refuge for people during the COVID-19 pandemic. “... We know that protecting our public lands and outdoor recreation opportunities, along with taking bold climate action, will boost the economy as we recover from the impacts of COVID-19.”

Over the past four years, officials from mountain communities have seen an increase in “antiquated” fossil fuel development on public lands, weakened environmental regulations and fast-tracking or eliminating environmental reviews for proposed projects, the letter states.

“This ‘energy dominance’ agenda has jeopardized both our public lands and public health while contributing to the climate crisis by causing the release of vast amounts of potent greenhouse gas emissions,” the letter states.

The group in the letter urges the Biden administration and the new Congress to prioritize adopting reforms that will reverse the devastating impacts the “energy dominance” agenda has had on Western mountain communities over the past four years.

The letter lists a variety of environmental actions the Biden administration and the 117th Congress should undertake:

- “Fight the Climate Crisis with bold action:” Halt new oil and gas leases on public lands; reject any royalty relief and lease suspension provisions for the oil and gas industry in future COVID relief packages; support state and local clean energy building requirements and initiatives; emissions reduction programs; and utilities with renewable energy goal
- “Help our western communities:” Include conservation-friendly financial support for local governments in future COVID relief packages; modernize the country’s antiquated public lands royalty system and ensure those who profit from it provide a fair return to the taxpayers; ensure the outdoors is a place for all by prioritizing environmental justice; restore environmental and public health safeguards.
- “Protect our Public Lands:” [Restore protection](#) for Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante national monuments; reverse the last-minute [oil and gas lease sale](#) in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; work to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030.