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The Mountain Pact: Interior Department Took Critical Funding Away from Communities to Bailout Beleaguered Oil and Gas Companies

New GAO Report Says Royalty Cut Was a Complete Failure

COLORADO-- Earlier today, POLITICO [reported](#) that the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) [found that the Interior Department did not conduct a proper analysis](#) before making steep cuts to royalty payments from oil and gas companies, and that those cuts were unnecessary and ineffective.

In reaction to the report, Anna Peterson, Executive Director of The Mountain Pact, an organization that works with communities across the Mountain West on federal policy, issued the following statement:

“When the Interior Department slashed royalty collection for drilling on public lands - they effectively stole money from our communities to enrich oil and gas executives. Already low royalty payments help fund much-needed school, hospital, and other critical infrastructure projects. News from the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office that these cuts were unnecessary and unhelpful only highlights the outrage people across the Mountain West should feel.”

“The Mountain Pact works with mountain community mayors, county commissioners, and local elected officials across the West who have been suffering during the pandemic and received little to no bailout money. Relief should be focused on helping our small towns and cities navigate this unprecedented public health crisis - not the beleaguered oil and gas industry and ineffectively at that. This is unacceptable and we demand better.”

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Founded in 2014, [The Mountain Pact](#) mobilizes local elected officials in over 75 Western mountain communities with outdoor recreation based economies to speak with a collective voice on federal climate, public lands, and outdoor recreation policy.