

Avon pledges support for Biden's pause on oil and gas leases

The adopted resolution also urges the administration to modernize the federal oil and gas leasing program as well as develop a plan to phase out the production of fossil fuels

News **NEWS** | May 13, 2021



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The Avon Town Council adopted a resolution at its meeting on Tuesday that pledges support for President Joe Biden's executive order to temporarily pause new oil and gas leasing on federal lands.

Daily file photo

[The Avon Town Council adopted a resolution at its Tuesday, May 11 meeting that pledges support for President Joe Biden's executive order to temporarily pause new oil and gas leasing on federal lands. The resolution was added to the agenda and adopted at the encouragement of](#)

[The Mountain Pact](#), a lobbying group that works with local mountain governments to address issues specifically impacting their communities.

The [executive order that President Biden passed on Jan. 27](#) put a pause on new oil and natural gas leases on public lands or in offshore waters in order to allow for a “comprehensive review and reconsideration of Federal oil and gas permitting and leasing practices.” According to the order, this review will include evaluating potential climate and other impacts as a result of oil and gas activities on these lands. The review will also [look at and potentially correcting low leasing prices and adjusting royalties](#).

[The resolution adopted by the town of Avon](#) pledges its support of the executive order and encourages the administration to both modernize the federal oil and gas leasing program as well as develop a plan to phase out the production of fossil fuels.

“This is a resolution that supports the notion that it’s time to just take a breath, not change anything that’s on the books already and just take another look at the entire structure of oil and gas leasing on public lands,” said Mayor Sarah Smith Hymes.

Initially, there was some resistance from the Avon Town Council due to the fact that the town does not have any oil and gas drilling leases within its jurisdiction. Smith Hymes admitted that when the Mountain Pact first approached Avon, she was hesitant but ultimately came around due to the nature of what the resolution supports.

“The reason that I came around to ask you to think about it is because it’s about funding for public lands. It’s about how our public lands are funded, who gets to use it and who pays to use it and that’s why,” Smith Hymes said. “The reason that it’s important to revisit is it’s all about the revenue that’s generated for public lands. And climate action crosses every jurisdiction.”

There was additional discussion that the town’s close proximity to counties, such as Garfield County, that do have drilling on public lands could have impacts on Avon. The impacts could come in the way of air pollution, seismology and other negative impacts, according to Mayor Pro Tem Amy Phillips.

Councilmember RJ Andrade also expressed some concerns about adopting the resolution in that this could result in potential job or revenue loss in other counties and jurisdictions.

“I just want to know if we’re stealing potential future revenue from other counties, that we have nothing to deal with,” Andrade said.

Ultimately, the council voted — with only Andrade dissenting — to adopt this resolution and pledge its support of President Biden’s executive order.

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