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THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

October 9, 2001

Energy Task Force
Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20503

On behalf of the Izaak Walton League of America and our 50,000 members and supporters across the country, I am writing to express our concerns about accelerated energy development proposed to occur across much of our western public lands. We have commented on proposed agency actions and are especially concerned about ongoing oil and gas developments in Wyoming's Green River Basin and Red Desert. This development is instructive as to the potential impacts on an array of wildlife and fish resources.

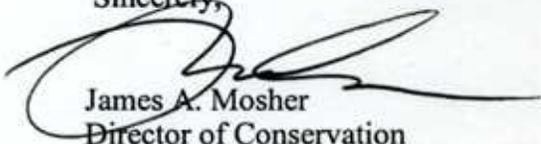
While it is not clear what individual species will be most affected or in precisely what manner, it is clear that these activities represent a major hazard to wildlife in some of the nation's most imperiled habitats. It is critical that increased attention by wildlife professionals is directed to this issue to assure that these resources are sustained into the future.

In particular, the process of extracting methane gas brings large amounts of water to the surface, often contaminated with toxic materials. Wetland areas may be formed by this waste water that attract waterfowl and other wildlife to these contaminated sites, and local streams may similarly be impacted as well as flows augmented altering important fish habitats.

The large big game herds, trout fisheries and some declining species that depend on many of the Northern Rockies habitats, where most oil and gas deposits occur, exist to a large degree because of huge investments by sportsmen over the past century. These resources continue to be supported almost solely by sportsmen's dollars and hunting and fishing license revenues. Hunters and anglers should not have to bear additional costs to protect and restore the fish and wildlife resources impacted by accelerated energy development.

We believe it is critical that a new, stable funding source for fish and wildlife habitats and other natural resources be established to assist affected states in managing these resources through the development period. We would appreciate a chance to discuss all these issues in more detail with the Energy Task Force.

Sincerely,



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Director of Conservation

cc: Office of the Vice President

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