



February 9, 2016

Colorado Bureau of Land Management
Ruth Welch, State Director
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, Colorado 80215-7093
Dear Director Welch:

On Thursday, November 12, 2015, 100 activists from all over Colorado joined together on public sidewalks outside the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Colorado State Office in Lakewood to demonstrate against the leasing of federal public lands for fossil fuel development. As part of this protest, six individuals engaged in a peaceful sit-in at the parking lot entrance of the BLM office.

During this peaceful protest, organizers and activists were in constant, civil and respectful communication with BLM staff and the local police. Protesters complied with BLM's requests regarding public auction attendance, and did not disrupt the auction. According to members of the public observing the lease sale, the lead auctioneer from the firm Odle-Cumberlin Auctioneers, referred to the public as "eco-terrorists" during the oral auction.

Throughout the protest, vehicles, BLM staff, visitors, and law enforcement were able to safely enter and leave the parking lot by an alternative entrance. At the end of the lease sale, activists were gathering to leave the public sidewalks and BLM parking lot entrance. At this point, a sport utility vehicle, license number CO 831 TVZ, drove into a plainly visible group of a dozen people at the parking lot entrance, striking one person. This individual was taken to the hospital via ambulance for further observation. The incident was witnessed by numerous groups, as well as Lakewood Police.

The incident was recorded on video, available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qXw9hekeSvI>

The driver was subsequently questioned, then released by Lakewood Police officers. An eyewitness reported that the driver was the lead auctioneer from Odle-Cumberlin Auctioneers. The police incident report lists the lead auctioneer as a person involved in the incident.

We are writing to condemn this gratuitous violence against peaceful demonstrators. We urge the **BLM to fully and immediately investigate its contractor's responsibility for the incident and the apparent use of violence and intimidation to retaliate against members of the public for the exercise of their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and assembly.**

Freedom of speech and assembly are core constitutionally protected rights, and BLM needs to ensure that all its employees, agents, contractors, and others operating under its authority respect the civil rights and safety of the public. BLM should take immediate action to investigate this incident, review its contracts or agreements with those involved, and take all appropriate action to make clear it does not condone or sanction acts of violence by its employees, contractors, or agents--including contract termination.

Your immediate response in this situation is necessary.

For a climate stable future,

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