

1. Deputy Director Culver's testimony states that the withdrawal "does not affect existing leases, nor does it apply to minerals owned by private, State, or Tribal entities."

a. I want to make sure the record is clear; will this withdrawal prevent allottees from developing their minerals?

Yes. It prevents the Allottees who wish to develop their unleased minerals. We need other lands (Federal BLM lands and state lands) to develop horizontal drilling and fracturing. There are many Allottees who have sought out leases and negotiated leases but have not been able to get them approved because BLM has been sitting on their applications for more than a decade. Some of these families live without running water and electricity and all of them have many serious needs. These people have been very active in trying to find ways to earn a living on their lands and have negotiated good economic terms, but they cannot start receiving royalties because the leases and federal units are not approved.

You need to understand that it is not just the withdrawal, BLM has stopped approving anything, even lines we need for our household utilities. Nobody understands how much this official federal policy is and how much it is confusion and delay. The people we used to work with at the BLM have stopped talking to us openly and telling us what is going on. You can see that they are under a lot of pressure.

2. In Mr. Atencio's testimony, he says that the region has an approximate 40% unemployment rate and about 40% of people live below the poverty line.

a. How will BLM's withdrawal impact these economic metrics – will it result in more unemployment and more folks living below the poverty line?

The withdrawal will only increase the amount of unemployment and poverty. Many of our neighbors who worked for the oil and gas companies are out of work. I recently attended a meeting on June 6, 2023, in Farmington and Aztec wells services said 100 of his employees, mostly Navajos were laid off and nobody could tell them when they would be able to return to work. Due to only 1 application being approved in the last week.

In our public comments, we told BLM that the Eastern Navajo Agency, which encompasses Navajo communities in Northern New Mexico, remain one of the least economically developed places in the United States. The Navajo Nation has an official poverty rate of 40.5 percent and a median household income of just \$26,862. See Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Navajo Nation Reservation Profile, available at <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/indiancountry/resource/reservation-profiles/navajo-nation-reservation> (accessed December 2, 2022). Economic conditions are even bleaker in the Eastern Navajo Agency, where the undersigned allottees- all enrolled citizens of the Nation – eke out a living on allotted lands allocated to their forebearers by the Federal Government as a modest consolation for removing the entire region from what used to be Navajo Indian Reservation ("Reservation"). Plaintiffs now seek to eviscerate the chief remaining source of economic benefit from the Navajo Allottee's limited landholdings: oil and gas revenue.

The Nageezi Chapter, a unit of local government adjacent to the Withdrawal area, the Navajo Times reported in 2013 that 30 percent of households lack electricity. Cindy Yurth, The Orphan on the Checkerboard, THE NAVAJO TIMES (April 9, 2013), <http://navajotimes.com/news/chapters/050913hue.php>. The neighboring Huerfano Chapter is only accessible by unpaved roads. Id. "the chapter does sport 15 churches, 2 [Bureau of Indian Education] boarding schools, a clinic, and at 90 square miles it's so large it hosts 2 land boards, 2 fire stations and 2 transfer stations." Id.

3. Deputy Director Culver's testimony states that the BLM's analysis found that the withdrawal would improve the "quality of life of local communities from the reduction of development of Federal minerals in this area."

a. Will this withdrawal improve your quality of life and the quality of life for the other allottees?

No. it will not improve our quality of life. It will only make it difficult to feed our families and improve our communities and to get roads, electricity and running water. This oil and gas field has been in operation for fifty years, and nobody ever say any negative effects until outside groups began to campaign against it. Our air and water are tested regularly so we would know if there were problems caused by oil and gas.

The withdrawal will not even protect Chaco Canyon. It is the tourists that are destroying the Great House. They trample over everything and litter and drive their cars up and down the canyon only a few feet from the ruins. I have family members who work for the park, and everyone there understands that if we really wanted to protect the Park we would restrict public access, not oil rigs operation five miles away. In Canyon de Chelly, which is managed by the Navajo Nation in cooperation with the Park Service, nobody is allowed to hike through the ruins except in small groups under the supervision of an official guide. If the public was serious about protecting Chaco, it would impose similar restrictions there, but they don't because that would interfere with their lives instead of ours.