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ALBUQUERQUE - While New Mexico families are focused on making sure their loved ones are safe and healthy during this fast-moving crisis, other problems are brewing at the state level that may cause pain for years to come. Plummeting oil and gas prices are draining the state budget of funds needed for public safety, health care, education, and more. Actions by the Trump Administration will make this long-term revenue crisis worse.

New leases that will allow companies to drill for oil and gas on federal lands are scheduled to go on sale in May. The lease rates are based on current oil and gas prices, so clearly any leases sold soon will go at bargain-basement prices. As New Mexico receives a share of the lease revenue, which helps put books in our classrooms and medicines in our clinics and hospitals, we will not be getting full value for our shared state resources. It is simply irresponsible for this Administration to allow leases to be sold at this time in this volatile market when prices are being driven by fights between oil-producing nations rather than normal supply and demand factors.

The Administration must do the right thing and postpone these lease sales until prices stabilize. It’s the right thing to do to protect New Mexico’s children and families.

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