

# Making Conservation Matter



From Federal Policy to Protecting Our  
Backyard---Rev. Andrew Black

[www.earth-keepers.org](http://www.earth-keepers.org)





# From Energy Dominance to Mindfulness & The Need for Oil & Gas Reforms

# *Revive Economic Growth & Reclaim Orphaned Wells* *Act 2021--Sen. Lujan (D-NM) & Cramer (R-ND)*

- **56,000 documented “orphaned” oil and gas wells (abandoned wells with no responsible party for cleanup)**
  - EPA Estimates 2 million undocumented wells across U.S. This bill helps track undocumented wells
  - National Crisis--40 producers declared bankruptcy in 2019 walking away from wells
  - O&G Industry Lost 100,000 Jobs since COVID
- **Methane and Community Health Impacts**
  - Methane is 84x more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>
  - In 2018, Abandoned Wells Leaked 7 million metric tons=1.5 million cars
  - Carcinogens impacting Tribal & local communities
  - Water Contamination Of Farms, Rivers and Lakes



# *Revive Economic Growth & Reclaim Orphaned Wells* *Act 2021 -- Sen. Lujan (D-NM) & Cramer (R-ND)*

- \$4.6 billion to plug wells, restore & reclaim
  - \$4.275 billion for orphaned well cleanup on state and private lands
  - \$400 million for orphaned well cleanup on public and tribal lands
    - \$250 million for public lands
    - \$150 million for Tribal Lands.
  - \$32 million for related research, development, and implementation
- **Jobs, Jobs and More Jobs**
- **REGROW ACT**



# *The Orphaned Well Cleanup and Jobs Act of 2021* Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM)

- **\$8 billion to plug wells, restore & reclaim**
  - \$7.25 billion for orphaned well cleanup on state and private lands
  - \$400 million for orphaned well cleanup on public lands
  - \$300 million for Tribal Lands.
  - \$50 million for related research, development, and implementation
- **Jobs, Jobs and More Jobs**
- **Also Requires Bonding Requirements**



# How Do We Prevent This Problem in the Future?

## Bonding Reform

- **Before drilling, oil & gas companies must put down a bond that's like a security deposit covering the cost of clean-up of well sites.**
  - Problem is that rates that establish the size of the bond were set in the 1950-60s so taxpayers are picking up the tab for the difference, which is billions of dollars.
- **Congress needs to update bonding requirements to ensure taxpayers aren't liable for future remediation and companies cover the cost of cleanup.**
- **Companies must submit interim and final reclamation plans prior to drilling**
- **Establish a public database for leasing including:**
  - Existing financial assurances
  - Current or future reclamation costs
  - Document orphaned and inactive wells
  - Violations or enforcement actions

# *Fair Returns for Public Lands Act, S.624 (Sen. Rosen D-NV and Grassley (R-IA).*

- Increases royalty rate for oil and gas leases from 12.5% to 18.75%
  - Makes rates consistent with Fed. offshore rates
  - Makes rates comparable to state and private royalty rates
  - CBO estimates this will raise an additional \$200 million in federal revenue over the next 10 years, with an equivalent amount going to the states where the oil or gas is extracted
  - Increase won't impact production-- reduction in production is estimated to be small or negligible



# *Fair Returns for Public Lands Act, S.624 (Sen. Rosen D-NV and Grassley (R-IA).*

- **Increases national minimum bid for oil and gas leases from \$2/acre to \$10/acre**
  - Most leases issued at \$2 per acre are never developed.
  - Will help end speculative leasing & ensure that only the most productive lands are leased (See Cortez Masto bill)
- **Increases the rental rates of oil & gas leases**
  - Currently, \$1.50/acre for the first five years and \$2/acre after that
  - New rate would be \$3/acre for the first 5 years and \$5/acre after that.





# **End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act (S. 607)**

## **(Sen. Cortez Masto D-NV)**

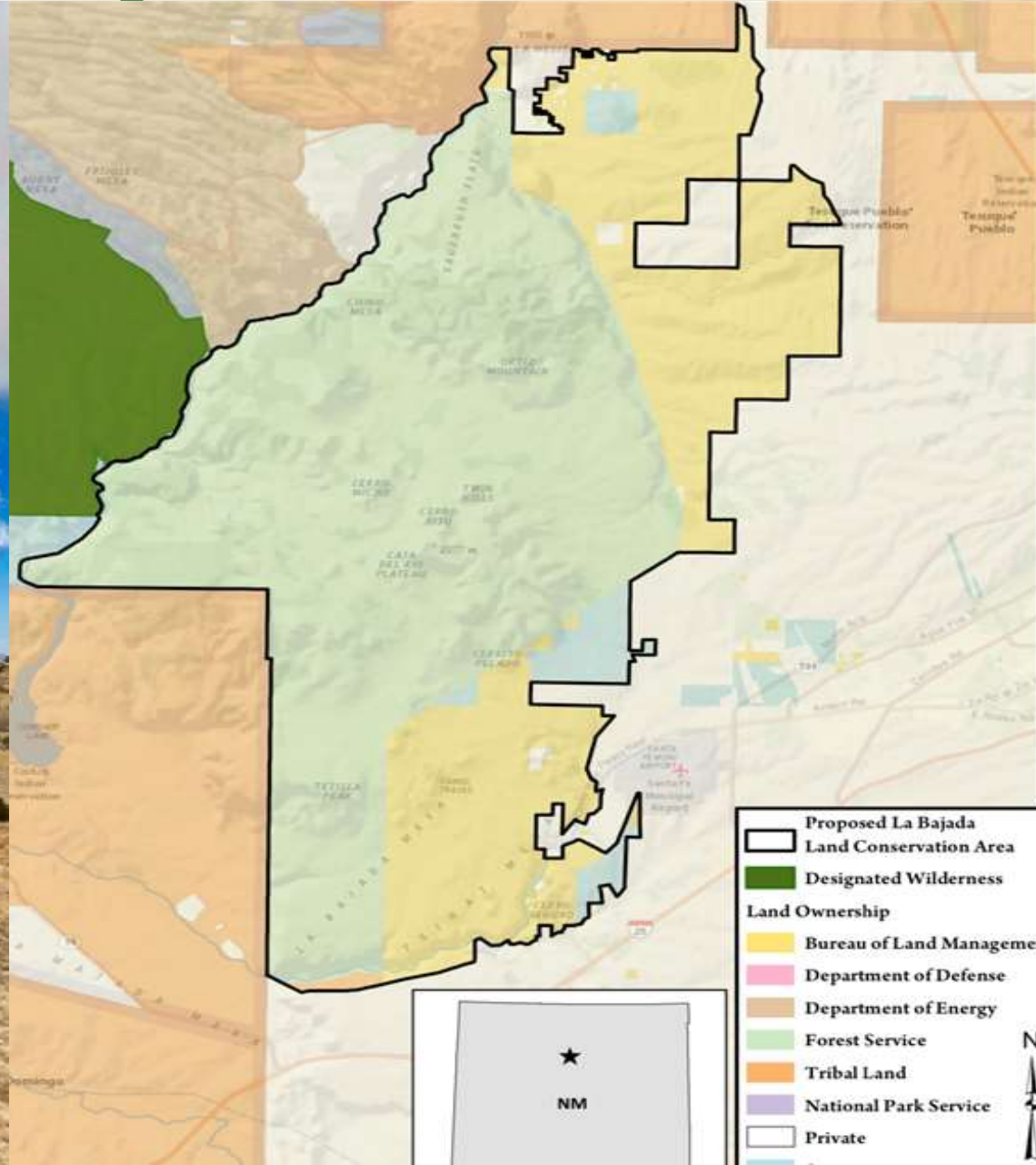
- **Prohibits BLM from offering leases on lands determined to have low/no development potential**
  - Currently BLM doesn't consider development potential at planning or leasing stage
  - As a result, 90% of BLM lands are open to oil and gas leasing even though less than a quarter have moderate to high potential for production
  - Industry merely has to nominate parcel to be considered to lease
  - Locks up public lands and keeps them from multiple use
- **Requires BLM to regularly assess oil and gas development potential on public lands**
  - Many BLM Resource Management Plans are decades old, including assessments related to oil and gas potential

# Restoration & Resilience in the Upcoming Infrastructure Bill \$200 Billion



- Put 3.5 million Americans to work. Over 10 million unemployed
- Capping Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells
- Abandoned Mines Cleanup
- Recover Imperiled Wildlife
- Expand Outdoor Recreation
- Forest Restoration
- Coastal Resiliency
- Watershed Restoration
- Restoring Sagebrush & Grasslands

# Protection of the Caja del Rio



















# Tribes Connected to the Caja del Rio

Cochiti,  
Kewa/Santo Domingo,  
Tesuque,  
Pojoaque,  
Jemez,  
Santa Clara,  
San Ildefonso,  
San Felipe,  
Sandia,  
Santa Ana,  
Ohkay Owingeh/San Juan  
Nambe, Navajo, Apache &  
Comanche



# Petroglyphs of the Caja del Rio

**13-17<sup>th</sup> Century Kersean speaking Pueblo & Spanish Petroglyphs**

**1991 Archelological Survey showed 4,400 petroglyphs in 1.5 Kilometers**

**Birds and Flute Players**



**“We don’t have our  
histories in books,  
they are written on  
the walls of our  
canyons.”**

***Regina Whiteskunk,  
2016 National  
Congress of  
American Indians***



# People of the Caja del Rio









# Agriculture on the Caja del Rio

















# Birds of the Caja del Río









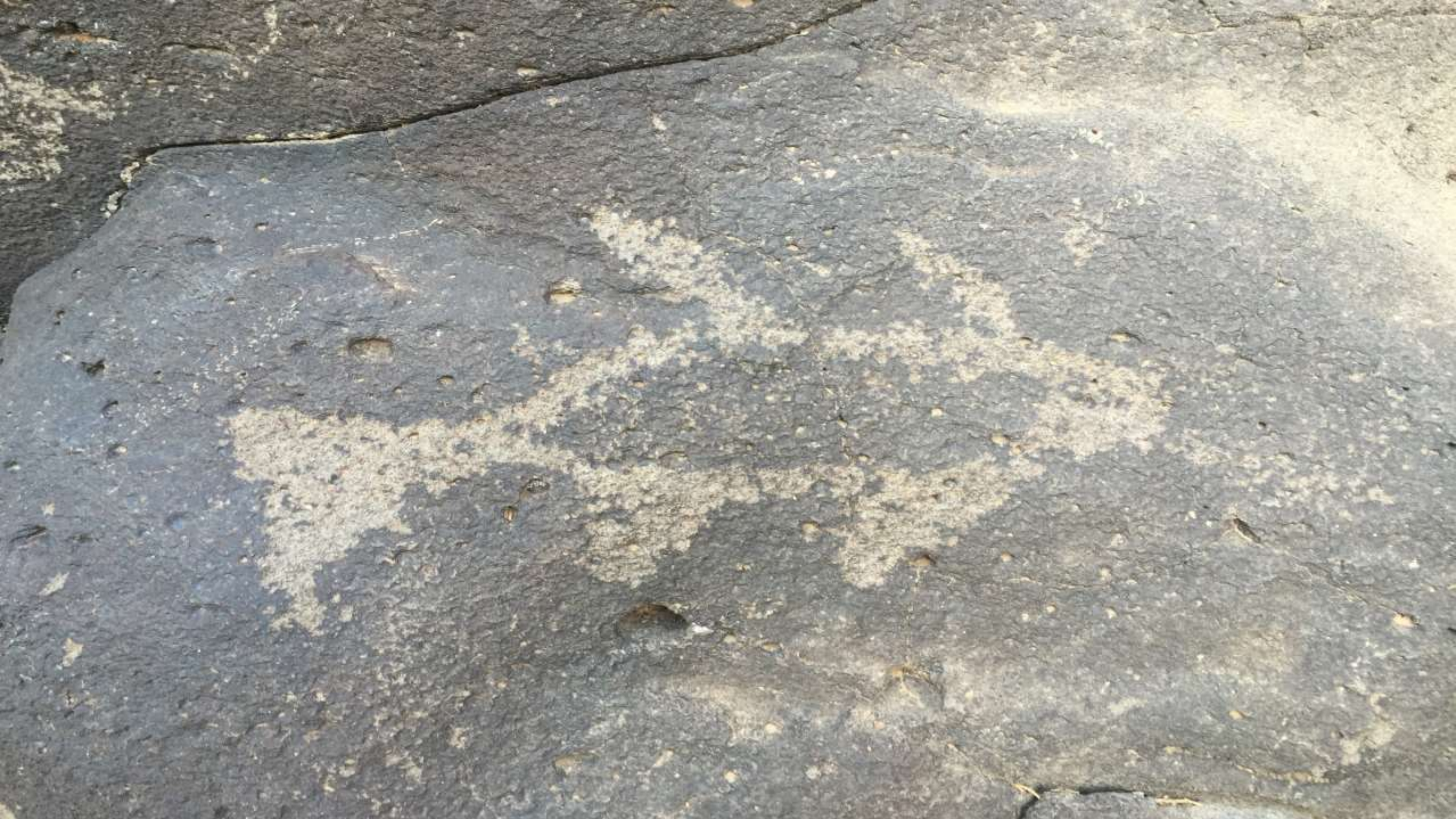






















# El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro

United States







# Threats Facing the Caja del Rio

- Road development
- Desecration & theft of petroglyphs/sacred sites
- Rampant off-road vehicle use
- Illegal dumping
- Unregulated shooting
- Poaching and destruction of endangered species
- Illegal wood cutting and rock removal
- Potential mining on BLM lands









