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October 12, 2016

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewel:

I write to urge the Administration to finalize the pending commercial oil shale regulations before the end of 2016.

Colorado enjoys an abundance of energy resources that, when developed responsibly, will continue to play a critical role in our diverse energy portfolio. Our state's history with oil shale – particularly the economic devastation caused on Black Sunday in 1982 – means that Coloradans are well aware of what can happen if we rush into oil shale development. Finalized oil shale regulations are essential to ensuring that any future commercial development in Colorado is conducted in a way that protects the environment and surrounding communities.

Our approach to oil shale development should be both measured and responsible given the potential effects extraction could have on water supplies, farmers, ranchers, and local communities in the West. In Colorado and throughout the west, we must ensure that management of our energy resources takes into account our water resources, which are critical to farmers, ranchers, and our state's economy.

The draft oil shale regulations were published in March 2013 and the public comment period closed in July 2013. While I understand that the Department has many priorities, Colorado communities, businesses, and energy producers have lacked clarity on the rules governing oil shale development for years. I encourage you to finalize the oil shale regulations prior to the end of this year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Bennet
U.S. Senator