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**Joint Dillon Keystone Police Department**

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**From** Ken Riley <kriley@keystoneco.gov>  
**Date** Tue 2/4/2025 11:15 AM  
**To** Jon Stavney <jstavney@nwccog.org>  
**Cc** John Crone <jcrone@keystoneco.gov>

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Jon

I want to thank you for your insights during the incorporation process. It was your initiative to go to the NWCCOG town managers for thoughts of how we should do policing. The input from Winter Park/Fraser became our model. It wouldn't have happened, and we wouldn't have a joint police department today if it wasn't for your help. You made a big difference in shaping our new Town.

Thanks

Ken



**Ken Riley**

Mayor

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719-332-9716  
kriley@keystoneco.gov  
1628 Sts John Rd. Keystone, CO 80435

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## Update on CDOT TPR Legislation

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From Dana Wood <dwood@nwccog.org>

Date Fri 2/7/2025 2:49 PM

Hello IMTPR Members!

We want to update members the IMTPR about recent developments regarding CDOT's proposal to split the region into two (east and west) IMTPRs:

As you may know, State Law requires exactly 15 TPRs in Colorado. So, for CDOT to split the IMTPR, two other TPRs would need to be combined. CDOT targeted combining Southeast and South Central TPRs. This TPR change proposal went to the Transportation Commission (TC) twice last year and the TC declined to rule on the proposal from CDOT.

To remove themselves from potentially being combined into one TPR, Southeast and South Central TPRs proposed legislation that would allow the number of TPRs in Colorado to expand from 15 to 16 (HB25-1046). Thus, allowing the IMTPR to be split unilaterally with no impact to other TPRs. Given public input and committee debate, the bill was recently postponed indefinitely. After this occurred and during the most recent STAC meeting, CDOT's Deputy Executive Director, Herman Stockinger, stated that there is "no appetite" from CDOT to bring the original TPR change proposal back to the TC for consideration.

So for now, the IMTPR will continue to serve as one TPR. Dana, Bentley, and I would like to thank all members of the IMTPR for their engagement in discussing this issue and for the professionalism exhibited in that debate. We look forward to a productive and successful 2025. See you all in April.

Thanks,  
Brian Pettet  
Director of Public Works  
Pitkin County  
76 Service Center Road  
Aspen, CO 81611  
970-920-5392

**Dana Wood, MBA (she/her/hers)**  
Mobility Director  
Northwest Colorado Council of Governments  
249 Warren Ave  
PO Box 2308  
Silverthorne, CO 80498  
Cell: 970-389-9510  
[Schedule time to talk!](#)





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## Denver-based oil and gas advocate Kathleen Sgamma nominated to head Bureau of Land Management



By Caitlyn Kim · Feb. 12, 2025, 8:37 am

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AP Photo/Mariam Zuhaib

*Kathleen Sgamma, President, Western Energy Alliance, speaks during a House Committee on Natural Resources hearing on America's Energy and Mineral potential, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023, on Capitol Hill in Washington.*

Updated at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2025.

President Donald Trump has nominated Kathleen Sgamma, head of the Denver-based Western Energy Alliance, to be the next director of the Bureau of Land Management, according to the [Congressional Record](#).

The White House or Trump has yet to comment on the nomination, which requires Senate confirmation.

A frequent witness on Capitol Hill, Sgamma has been a strong advocate for the oil and natural gas industry, leading a group that represents independent oil and natural companies in the West, and oil and gas leasing on public lands.

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It would be a big change from Tracy Stone-Manning, former President Joe Biden's BLM team lead, who put conservation on equal footing as other uses, such as leasing and grazing. It was a [position](#) that [Sgamma](#) and Republicans in Congress fought against.

However, it is inline with [Trump's desire to "unleash" American energy](#). The president said America would "drill, baby, drill" during his inaugural address.

[During](#) a recent interview with CPR News on Trump's energy actions, Sgamma said she saw the administration's agenda as part of getting back to regular order.

"Moving forward with lease sales, moving forward with permitting on federal lands, moving forward with completing environmental analysis," she said. "We would expect

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development proceeding on them.

Sgamma added that Trump's moves would "counterbalance the swing in one direction by the Biden Administration" into renewables such as wind and solar.

"They were promoted, over promoted, during the Biden Administration," she said.

The fossil fuel advocate also expressed concern that renewable energy could destabilize the nation's electric grid. "If you take out base load coal and natural gas power and replace it with intermittent solar and wind, you can get a situation of grid instability," she said. "That is the situation we see particularly in the Midwest, northeast, and the West Coast."

This is the second time Trump has looked to a Coloradan to lead the agency within the Interior Department that is responsible for more than 247 million acres of public lands. During his first term, he named William Perry Pendley to lead the agency, but Pendley withdrew when it became clear that he could not get enough support for his confirmation.

Perry Pendley wrote the [Project 2025](#) section on the [Department of the Interior](#), with Sgamma named as a contributor.

## Environmentalist backlash was swift

Sgamma's nomination has already drawn the ire of conservation and public lands groups.

Rachel Hamby, policy director of the Center for Western Priorities, described Gamma as an inappropriate choice to run the BLM. "This appointment will hand the keys to our public lands over to oil and gas companies. Sgamma will seek to lease every inch of our lands for drilling, no matter their recreational, scenic, ecological, or cultural value," she said in a statement.

Taylor McKinnon, southwestern director for the Center for Biological Diversity, said Sgamma would be a disaster for public lands.

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lands,” McKinnon said in a statement. “Everyone who treasures the outdoors should oppose her nomination. If Sgamma’s confirmed, we’ll fight her attacks on public lands and wildlife at every step.”

*Editor's note: This story has been updated with statements from Kathleen Sgamma and environmentalists, and to clarify that her nomination still awaits Senate confirmation.*

### Related Stories:

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Dear Partners and Friends:

It is with a heavy heart I let you know that I will soon be leaving the US Forest Service. I have requested and been approved for the deferred resignation program and will be retiring sometime later this year. This is very difficult decision for me given the challenges we are facing right now; but it is the right thing for me to do at this point in my life.

The highlight of my 34-year career has been working with all of you. The last 15+ years has truly been my dream job. It wasn't always easy but rewarding in so many ways. I cherish the communities of this Forest. You have all been such great partners and so supportive over the years – and I think we accomplished many great things. The White River is a national treasure and helping steward these resources and serving our communities has been a blast. I am proud of the work we accomplished and am going to dearly miss these amazing resources. But what I will miss the most is working side by side with all of you innovating, creating, and solving problems.

I do not know exactly when we will be leaving. (could be this Friday or a week or two from now) I am working with my boss to discuss a transition plan until a permanent Forest Supervisor and Deputy can be hired. This is a work in progress, and we will keep you posted on our progress. I have tremendous confidence the White River leadership team will step up as they always do.

-Scott

P.S. Maybe down the road there will be a proper retirement party – This all happened so fast so I will be around the area for a while... feel free to reach out to me at any time:

[sfitzwilliams@msn.com](mailto:sfitzwilliams@msn.com)  
970-366-0227





## AGRICULTURE

## Forest Service fires 3,400 people after 'deferred resignation' deadline passes

The cuts amount to about a 10 percent reduction in the agency's workforce.



A U.S. Forest Service sign welcomes visitors to Clackamas Lake Historic Area, Sept. 27, 2014. | Natalie Behring/Getty Images

By **MARCIA BROWN** and **JORDAN WOLMAN**

02/13/2025 06:50 PM EST

Updated: 02/14/2025 09:02 AM EST



The U.S. Forest Service will fire roughly 3,400 federal employees across every level of the agency beginning Thursday, according to two people familiar with the plans.

The move targets employees who are still within their probationary period, which means it's easier for them to be let go.

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Public safety employees at USFS are exempt from the firing. While firefighter jobs appear to be unaffected, other roles that support wildfire prevention are being cut. Employees who work on road and trail maintenance, timber production and watershed restoration are also impacted.

The layoffs come one day after the deadline for the Trump administration's "Fork in the Road" program, which encouraged employees to resign but stay on the government payroll through September. It's not yet clear how many USDA employees accepted the deferred resignation option.

A USDA spokesperson declined to comment on "individual personnel actions."

"Protecting the people and communities we serve, as well as the infrastructure, businesses, and resources they depend on to grow and thrive, remains a top priority for the USDA and the Forest Service," the spokesperson said in a statement. "Our wildland firefighter and other public safety positions are of the utmost priority."

The cuts would reduce the agency’s workforce — a total of 35,000 employees — by about 10 percent, potentially making it harder for the federal government to address increasingly intense wildfires and manage millions of acres of federal forests and grasslands. Forest Service employees in probationary periods are more likely to be the ones doing field work, such as moving timber sales and helping to mitigate wildfires, than their more senior counterparts.

Federal agencies, including the Department of Energy and Small Business Administration, are also planning similar cuts.

The Trump administration — with its allies at Elon Musk’s so-called Department of Government Efficiency — has moved quickly to slash government spending and shrink the federal workforce. USDA has already put employees who worked in diversity, equity and inclusion-related roles on administrative leave. Trump’s dismantling of U.S. Agency for International Development also placed more than a dozen employees at the Foreign Agricultural Service on administrative leave with the possibility of furlough.

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SPONSORED CONTENT

# CO West Slope Letdown: Boebert left, MAGA stuck around

Data Dump: Setting baselines to monitor "energy dominance" under Trump



JONATHAN P. THOMPSON

MAR 11, 2025



26



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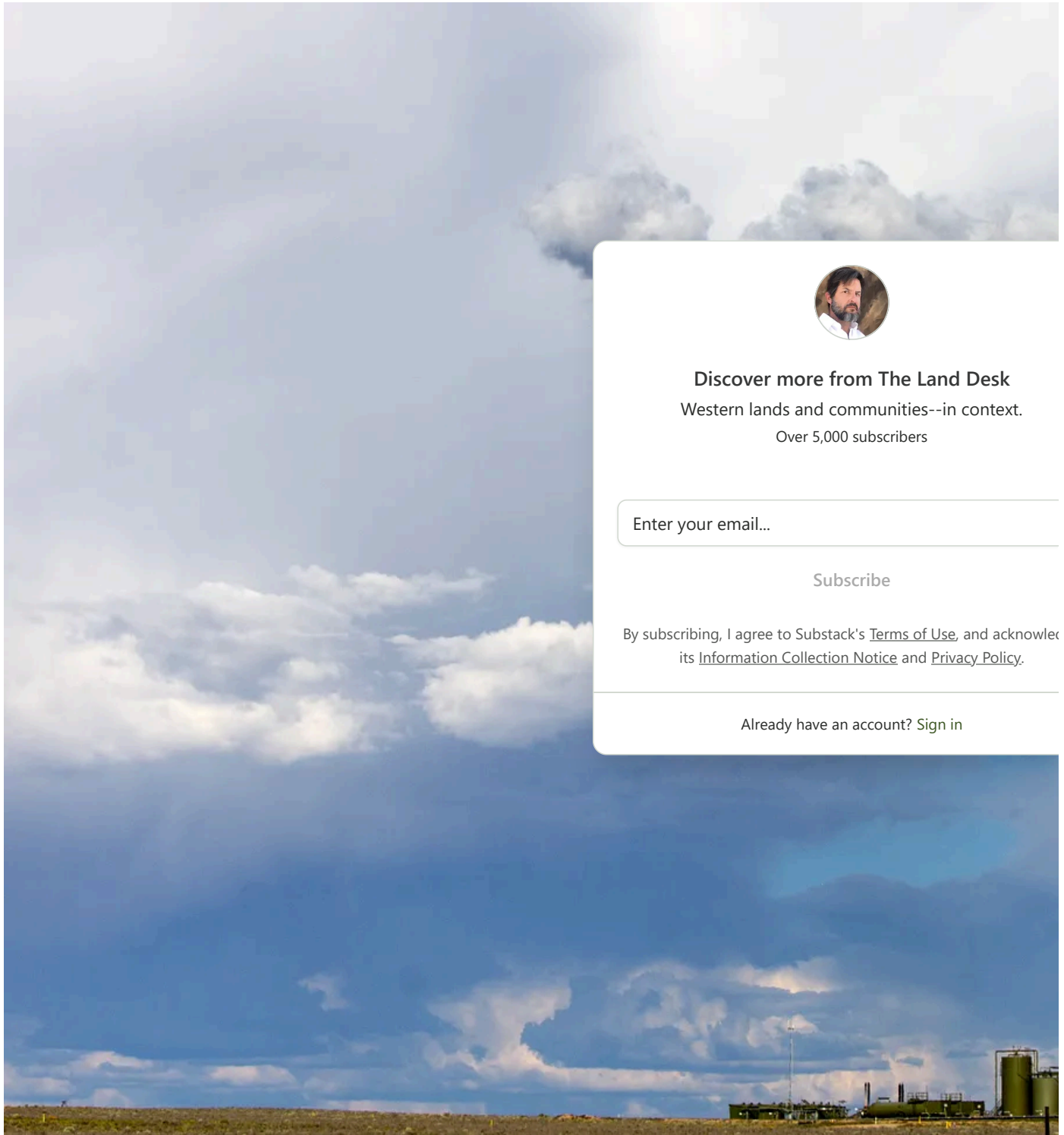
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Clearly Thompson is left-leaning, but that data is extraordinarily thorough with regard to O&G

Many of us have not heard from Rep. Hurd there are some indications reported here as to why

Jon's Notes



Sky with oil and gas infrastructure, Greater Chaco Region. Jonathan P. Thompson photo.

When Republican **Jeff Hurd** was elected to represent Colorado's third congressional district, I believe I heard **a bipartisan, collective sigh of relief**. Democrats may have been sad that their candidate didn't win, but at least the new guy wasn't Lauren Boebert. And, many of us hoped, **Hurd would represent a return of the independent and pragmatic Western politician of old to western and southern Colorado**.



We were wrong.

So far, Hurd's performance in office has pretty much followed Boebert's lead, politically, albeit without the gun-slinging and other outrageous antics. When one of his aides showed up to meet with constituents in Dolores, she fled after seeing the size of the crowd assembled there. Hurd, himself, chickened out from attending a town hall in Grand Junction for similar reasons. Instead of apologizing for refusing to listen to the people he represents, he accused the crowd of being George Soros-funded activists — a false and worn-out, right-wing anti-semitic trope that really needs to be retired. In fact, the folks were his constituents, including members of Indivisible and the League of Women Voters. These weren't exactly molotov cocktail hurling radicals.

And when CPR's Ryan Warner asked him about the mass federal employee firings that have hit his district especially hard, Hurd gave mealy mouthed answers, saying efficiency is good, acknowledging he had no idea how many employees had lost their jobs, and lamenting the possibility that some good people may have been terminated, too, though it was also clear that he wasn't going to do anything about it, especially if it meant questioning or, God forbid, standing up to Musk and Trump.

Hurd introduced a bill that would move the Bureau of Land Management headquarters to Grand Junction because it's better to have management staff on the ground, yet he has not pushed back on DOGE's plans to close federal offices throughout his district, including the Bureau of Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers offices in Durango. He has teamed up with Boebert to criticize Colorado for importing "foreign wolves" into the state and has parroted MAGA's anti-immigrant hysteria in regards to Denver's tolerance.

Now Hurd has introduced the Productive Public Lands Act to "unlock resource development on some of our most productive lands." It would toss Biden-era Bureau of Land Management resource management plans — which he claims "locked up access to viable lands" — and replace them with fossil fuel-friendly ones with the aim of putting "us on a path to energy dominance." Talk about inefficient: Those RMPs took years to develop and are the result of extensive studies, public input, and compromise. Trashing them is a perfect example of government waste.

Note to Rep. Hurd: Public lands are not locked up. Quite to the contrary.

Unfortunately Hurd — like his predecessor — has chosen to let MAGA ideology and disinformation blind him to the facts. Still, I've got to try, so here I go again: The United States is producing more oil and gas — much of it from public lands — than it ever has before, and is the world's leader in hydrocarbon production. Read that again.

Then again. And keep doing so until it penetrates your thick skull so that you can stop wasting all of our time with your “war on energy” nonsense.

While drilling has shifted away from Colorado and is now centered on the Permian Basin, it has nothing to do with BLM regulations or resource management plans. It’s because western Colorado is rich in natural gas, not so much in oil, and there’s far less money in natural gas production than there is in crude oil. Nevertheless, oil, gas, coal, and carbon dioxide production from federal lands in Colorado (much of which are on the Western Slope) generated \$205 million in revenue last year. Locked up? I don’t think so.



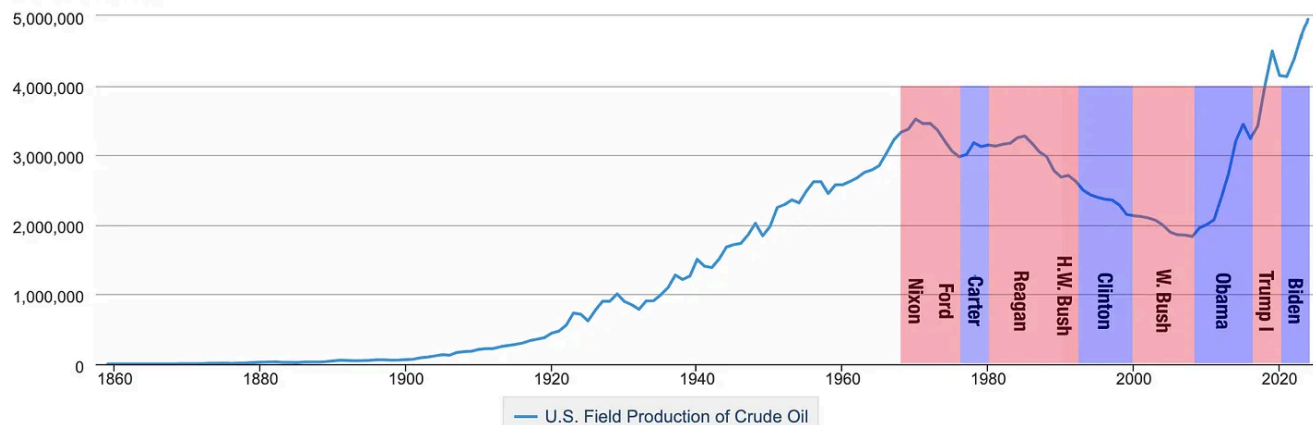
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As long as I’m on the topic of “energy dominance,” I figured it would be a good time to set out some baseline data for tracking the progress of Trump’s “drill, baby, drill” agenda. As has been established, the Trumps and Hurds of the world believe that energy production from federal lands has been “locked up,” and that by “unleashing” it — i.e. rescinding environmental protections — the oil and gas industry will bring in a battalion of drill rigs, send oil and gas production through the roof, and bring down prices at the pump to make it cheaper to drive those gas-guzzling behemoths that now dominate the roadways.

It’s too early in Trump’s term to determine whether that’s actually happening or not, so let’s just check in on where we are and what has happened over the last four years. And we’ll keep updating these graphs periodically. *Land Desk* readers have seen some of these before. Sorry about that.

### U.S. Field Production of Crude Oil

Thousand Barrels

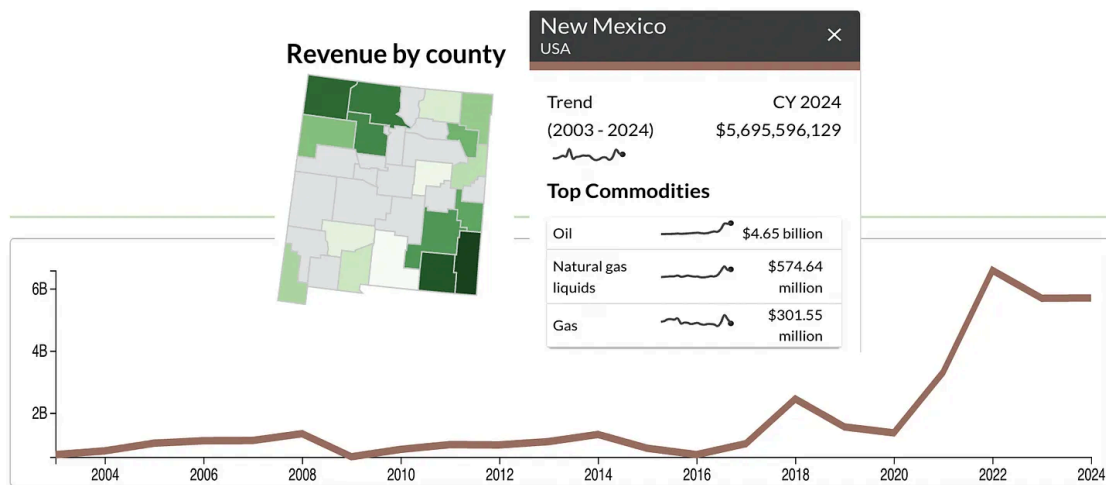




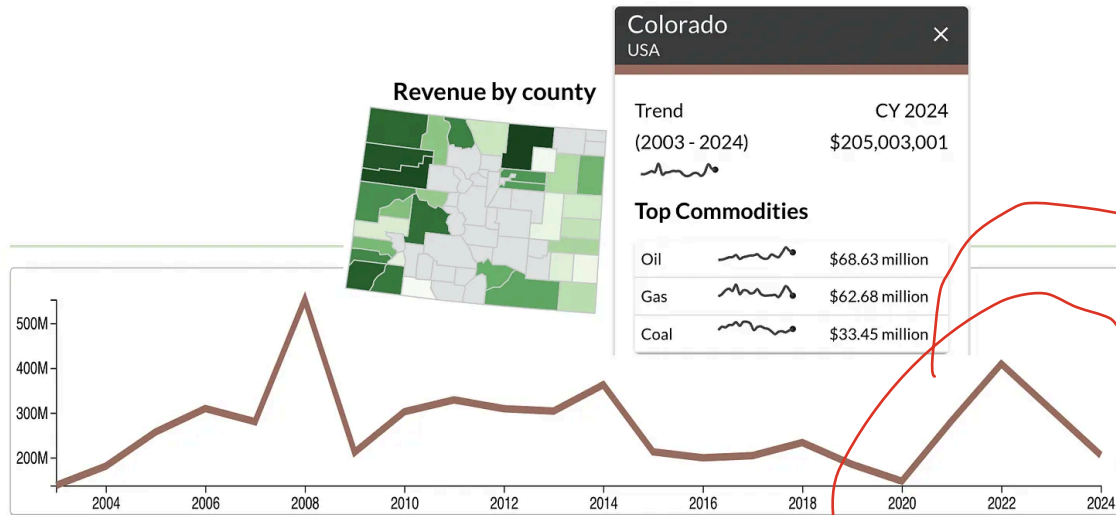
This one shows U.S. crude oil production. It was in steady decline until about 2009, kicking back up again just as Obama took office. Is that because Obama slashed regulations on drilling? No. It's because that's when horizontal drilling-multistage hydraulic fracturing, i.e. fracking, came into its own and oil prices increased. Production dipped at the end of Obama's second term because OPEC decided to wage a price war on U.S. producers, glutting the market with crude in hopes of driving some U.S. companies out of business. And it dipped again at the end of Trump's first term because of COVID. In December, while Biden was still in office, U.S. fields produced 418 million barrels of crude, an all-time record high. Source: Energy Information Administration.

Production goes up after drilling activity increases. Drilling activity generally responds to crude oil prices. When prices are high, it's more profitable to develop new oil and gas wells, so the drilling rigs are dusted off and head out into the fields. When prices are low, they are folded up and hauled back to the storage yard.

And lest you think that maybe all of that production is coming from private or state lands since, after all, the federal land has all been "locked up" by Biden's purported war on energy, check out the revenues from federal land resource production for New Mexico and Colorado. Funny how they shot up right after Biden was elected, no?

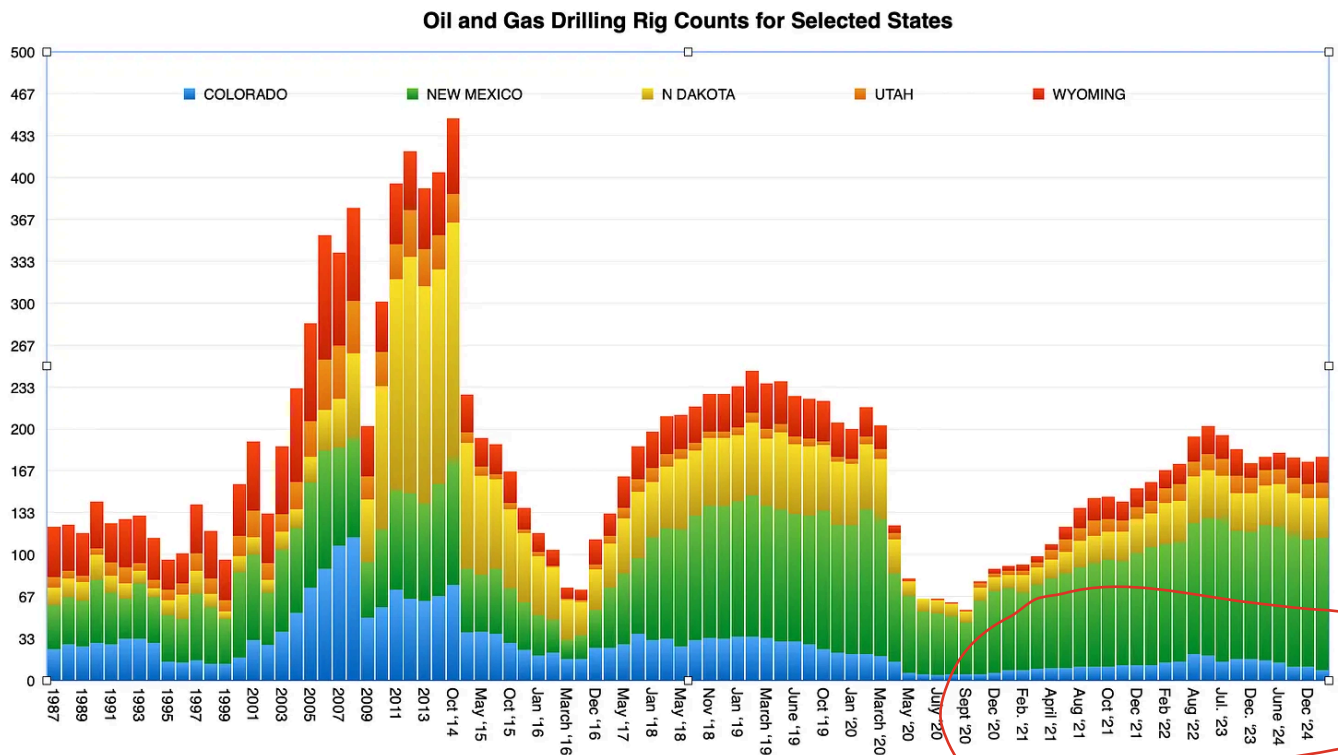


Oil production from federal lands in New Mexico generated \$4.65 billion last year, down slightly from 2022 but still significantly more than during any other time during the last two decades. Source: Office of Natural Resource Revenue.



Colorado's energy industry has had a slightly rougher go of it, mainly because it specializes in natural gas, not crude oil, and methane prices have been low since the 2009 crash. Note to Jeff Hurd: Revenues were substantially higher under Biden than under Trump I. Just sayin'. Source: ONRR

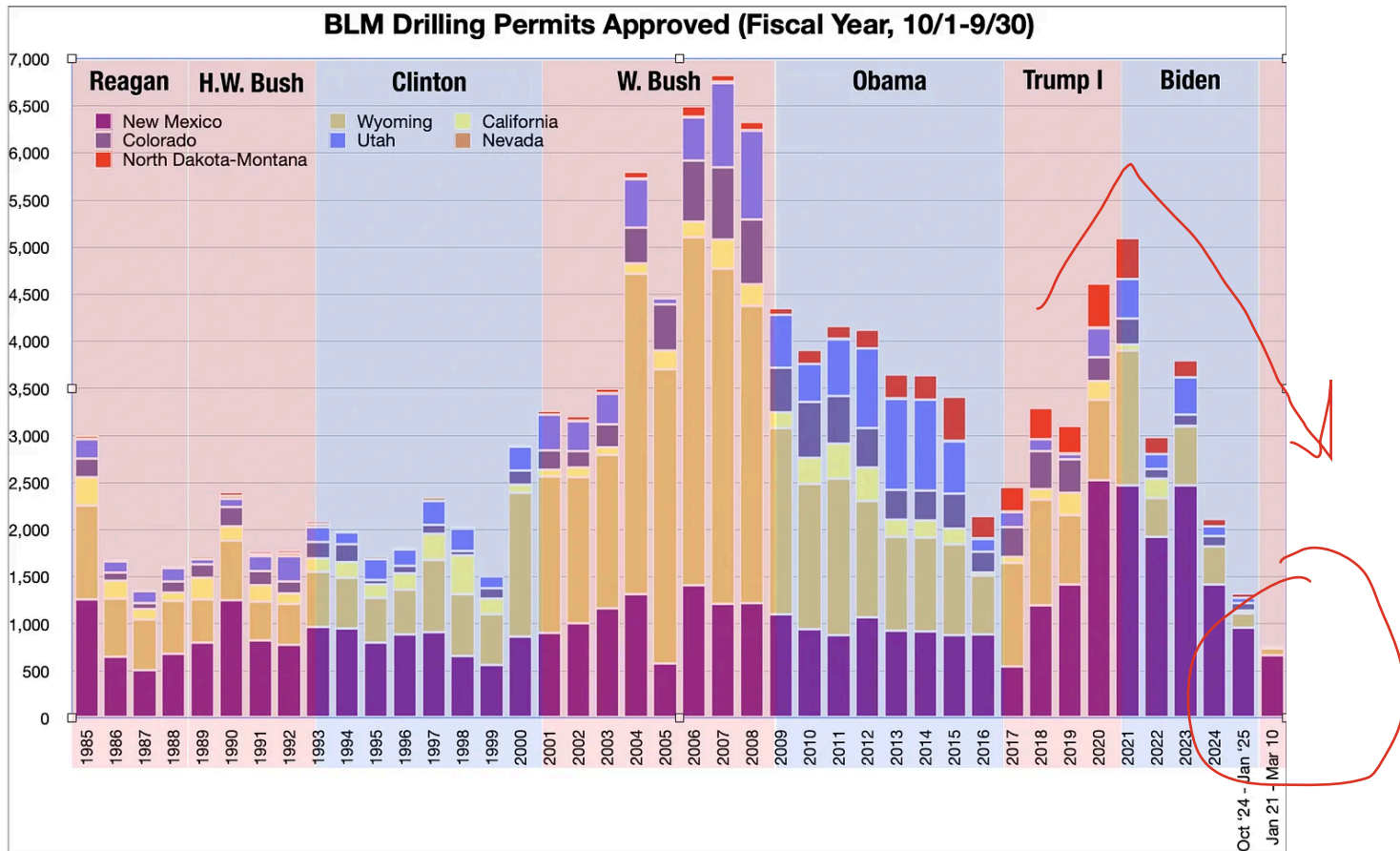
The best way to get a feel for drilling activity is to check out the weekly rig count. So here it is. But a note to all you statisticians out there: The time intervals are uneven on this graph, in part due to my own laziness. But it still gives a fairly accurate picture of drilling activity over time, so it works.



This gives a good illustration of the level of drilling activity and where it's taking place. This shows the OPEC price war dip in 2015 and 2016 and the COVID dip in 2020. Again, these are driven almost entirely by the price of crude oil, which is determined by the global market. North Dakota dominated for a while, but never

recovered from the 2015 crash. Instead, activity moved to the Permian Basin in New Mexico and Texas. The rig count for Western states remained remarkably stable during the Biden administration. Source: Baker-Hughes.

The thing about production and rig counts, though, is they don't really reflect White House policy. So how about the number of drilling permits approved by the Bureau of Land Management?



On average, Biden's BLM issued around the same number of drilling permits as Trump I. This may have something to do with policy, but it is also driven by how many firms apply for permits and how well-equipped and staffed the field offices are to process those applications. Note that during the last four months of Biden's term, the BLM issued over 1,300 permits. So far, the Trump II administration has issued 774 permits in just over two months. Source: BLM.

Now that we have a snapshot of where we've been and where we are in terms of oil and gas development, we can track where we might be headed under Trump 2.0. My guess? We're going to see all of the above indicators begin falling soon. Sure, rig counts are staying steady, meaning production will continue to rise for a few more months. But after that, lower oil prices are likely to kick in, dimming companies' enthusiasm for drilling, which will hit the rig count first and then production.



Oil prices are **dropping** — they hit sub-\$70/bbl this week for the first time since 2021 — because OPEC decided to start pumping more crude and because the economy is struggling, which will likely dampen demand. The economy is struggling because markets are reacting unfavorably to the chaos Trump, Musk, and company are wreaking from the White House. Turns out that tariffs, trade wars, and haphazard termination of critical federal employees is bad for the economy. Gasoline prices will likely fall, too, except in places that rely on Canadian crude, where they might increase. So there is that. Of course, if you lose all your money in the plummeting stock market, it won't really matter much, I suppose.

**Speaking of tariffs**, remember when I wrote about Trump's trade wars and predicted that **American whiskey and bourbon makers would be casualties**? Turns out I was right. Kentucky distillers, especially the small ones, are already **feeling the pain**, and even large ones are smarting from Canada's retaliatory moves. I suppose Trump will claim the Canadians started the trade war, just as he's ridiculously asserting Ukraine invaded Russia.

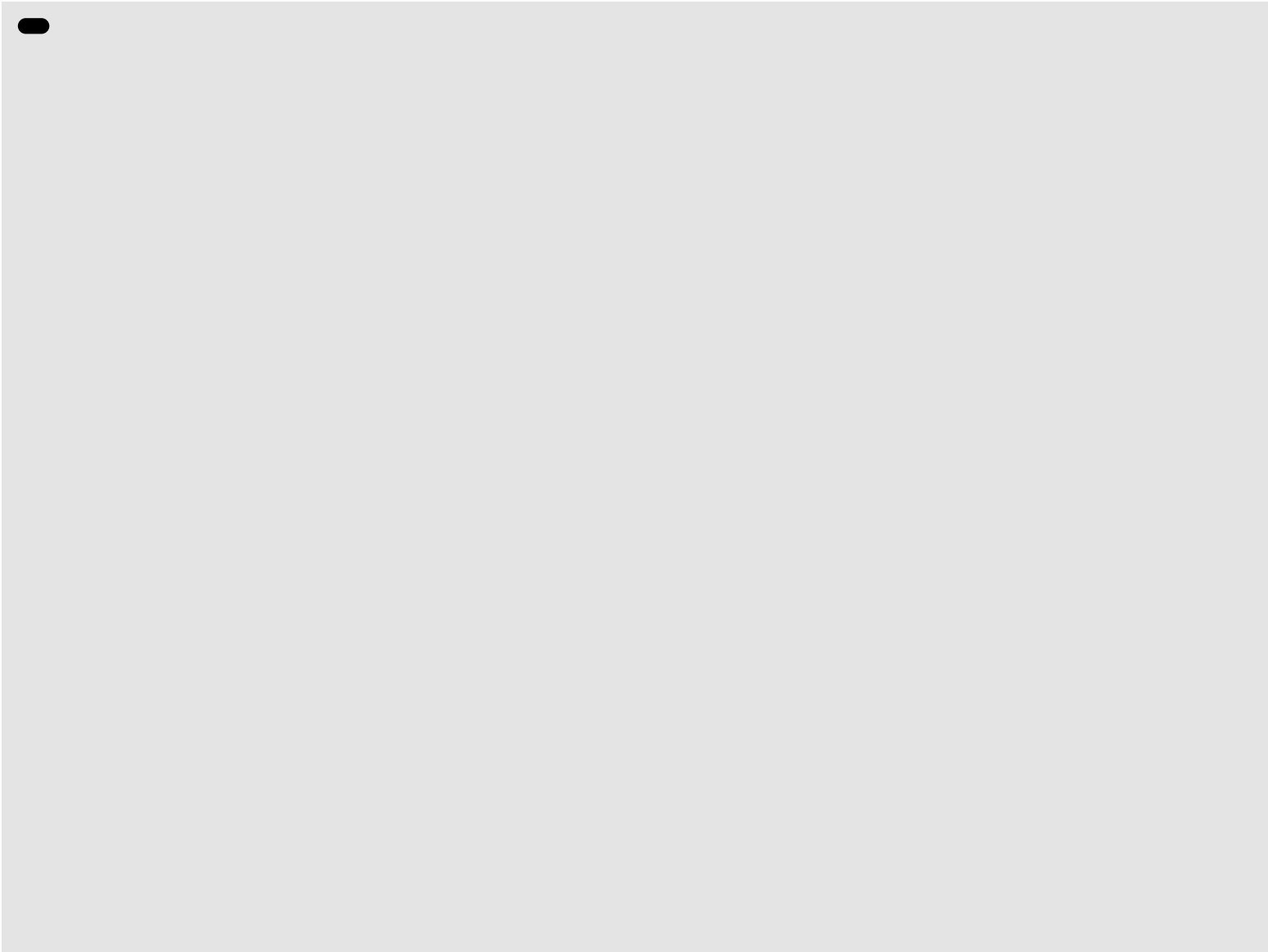
 **Parting Shot** 



# Federal funding pause includes 17 water projects on Western Slope

By HEATHER SACKETT Aspen Journalism   Mar 10, 2025 Updated Mar 11, 2025   4 min to read





Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

Manager of the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District Jackie Fisher points out the crumbling concrete in the lining of the district's canal No. 1. Orchard Mesa Irrigation District was awarded a \$10.5 million federal grant for infrastructure upgrades, but that funding has been paused by the Trump administration.

Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

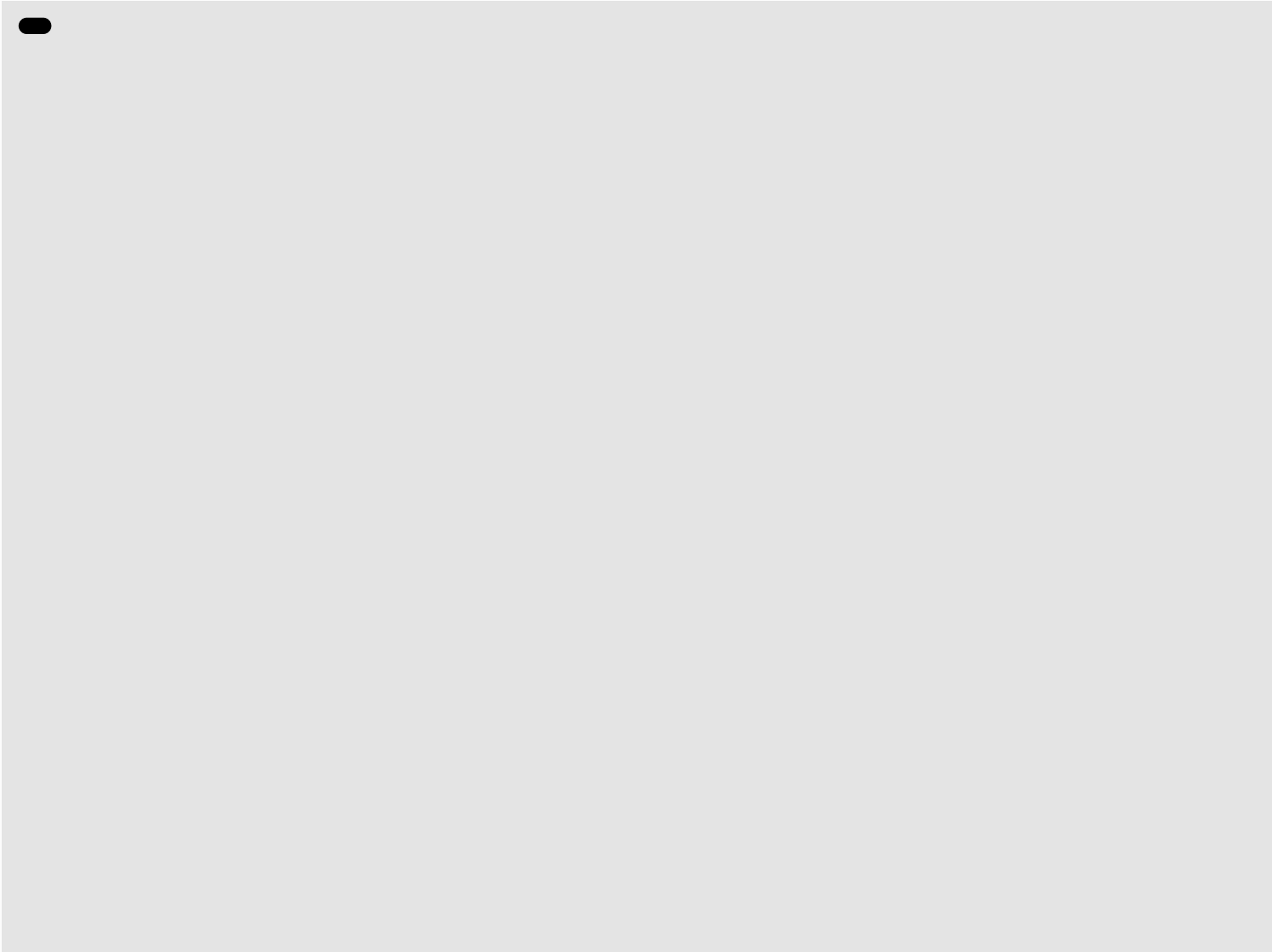
In the Grand Valley south of U.S. Highway 50, Orchard Mesa Canal No. 1 winds through 18 miles of rural agricultural farmland and residential backyards.

In January, the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District was promised \$10.5 million from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to pipe the open canal — which has crumbling chunks of concrete and rebar poking out along its sides — and install more-efficient valves instead of headgates. In addition to delivering water more easily to the 6,700 users in the district, a goal of the project is to improve the irrigation system's efficiency so more water could be left for endangered fish in a critical 15-mile stretch of the Colorado River.

But the future of the project is uncertain because about \$151 million in funding for projects aimed at conservation and drought resilience on the Western Slope has been frozen by the Trump administration.

“We are on hold ourselves because we don’t have the revenue to move forward,” said Jackie Fisher, manager of the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District.

On Jan. 17, during the final days of the Biden administration, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation announced it had awarded \$388 million in funding through the Inflation Reduction Act for projects throughout the Colorado River’s Upper Basin (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming). The money was allocated through what the bureau called “Bucket 2, Environmental Drought Mitigation,” or B2E, which is earmarked for projects that provide environmental benefits and address issues caused by drought.



Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

Palisade Town Manager Janet Hawkinson points out the aerators in the town’s wastewater lagoons. The Town plans to pipe its



wastewater to Clifton's treatment plant and reclaim the nine-acre area as wetlands using a \$3 million federal grant — funding that has now been paused by the Trump administration.

Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

But only three days later, the Trump administration issued an executive order, “Unleashing American Energy,” which said “all agencies shall immediately pause the disbursement of funds appropriated through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022.”

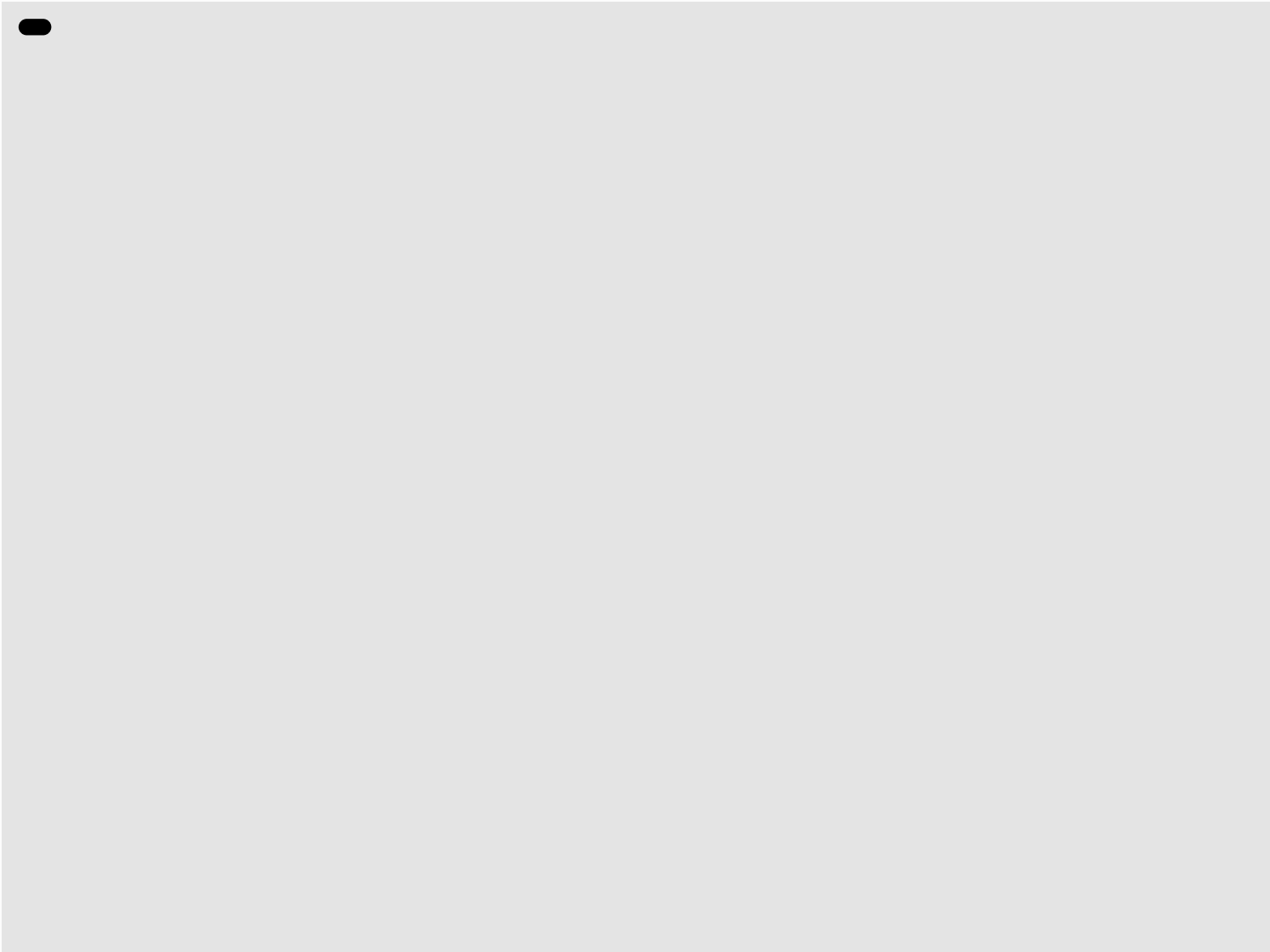
Water managers say they are waiting on information from the bureau and have not heard anything about the status of funding since the Jan. 17 announcement. Most are operating under the assumption funding is still paused and, with it, their projects. The Trump administration has yet to appoint a new Bureau of Reclamation commissioner.

“Officially, from Reclamation we have not heard a thing,” said Steve Wolff, general manager of the Durango-based Southwestern Water Conservation District, which was awarded \$26 million for drought mitigation. “We’re very happy we were successful, but now we are in a no-man’s land.”

Officials from the bureau did not respond to questions from **Aspen Journalism** about the status of the funding.

Seventeen of the 42 Upper Basin projects are in western Colorado and include things such as almost \$3 million for dam removal and wetlands restoration at Fruita Reservoir; \$1.9 million for **studying the effectiveness of beaver dam analogs in the headwaters of the Roaring Fork River**; and **\$4.6 million for drought resiliency on conserved lands**. The funding pause also affects six tribal water projects in the Upper Basin, including \$16 million for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe for drought mitigation on the Pine River.





Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

The Town of Palisade was awarded a \$3 million grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to convert these wastewater lagoons into a wetlands habitat with public access to the Colorado River. It's one of 17 projects in Western Colorado aimed at addressing drought that have had their federal funding frozen by the Trump administration.

Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

Abby Burk, a senior manager with Audubon Rockies' Western Rivers Program, said everyone awarded the funding is in limbo now. Burk is involved with two of the projects awarded B2E money in the Grand Valley: the Fruita Reservoir dam removal and restoration, and a project in Palisade that would convert wastewater lagoons into wetlands.

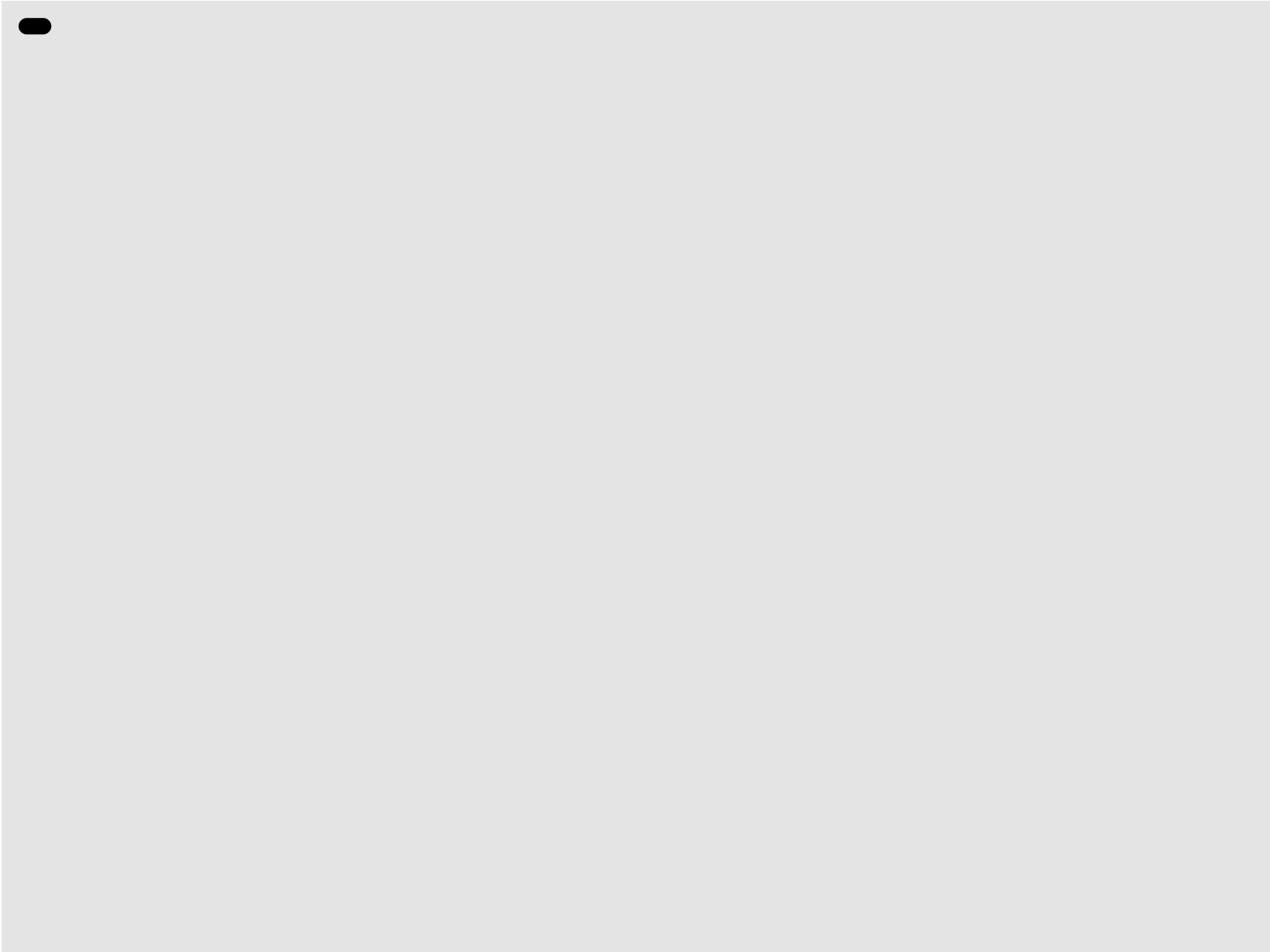
“We’ve got some great projects that are just hanging in the air waiting for a decision,” Burk said. “We in the environmental community are trying to support our project partners; we are just at a momentary loss. There’s just quite a bit of uncertainty.”

The uncertainty surrounding B2E funding comes at a crucial time for the Colorado River basin, which has been plagued by drought and dwindling streamflows because of climate

change for more than two decades. Representatives from the seven Colorado River basin states (California, Arizona and Nevada, which comprise the Lower Basin) are in the midst of tense negotiations about how the nation’s two largest reservoirs — Lake Powell and Lake Mead — will be operated and how water-supply shortages will be shared in the future.

Some water managers said that without this once-in-a-lifetime federal funding they were promised, many of these projects probably won’t happen. Southwestern Water Conservation District was awarded the grant, but the district plans to distribute the money to smaller local entities for a variety of projects, including invasive plant control through the Mancos Conservation District; to the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe for erosion control and restoration; and to Mountain Studies Institute for restoration of fens.

“For these projects to happen, we absolutely need this funding,” Wolff said. “I certainly hope it does shake loose.”



Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

These lagoons are part of the Town of Palisade's wastewater treatment plant. The town was awarded \$3 million from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's B2E grant program to transform the lagoons into wetlands, providing habitat for birds and fish.

Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

The \$10.5 million awarded to the Orchard Mesa Irrigation District would cover the entire cost of the canal piping project, and without federal money, the district would struggle to pay for it, Fisher said.

"We already run on a shoestring budget, so a \$10.5 million project is nearly impossible," Fisher said. "We're pinching pennies all the way around."

The Glenwood Springs-based Colorado River Water Conservation District is the recipient of the biggest B2E award in Colorado: \$40 million toward the purchase of the Shoshone water rights. The River District is in the midst of a campaign to buy the water rights associated with Xcel Energy's hydropower plant in Glenwood Canyon for \$99 million. These water rights are some of the oldest nonconsumptive rights on the Western Slope and help keep water flowing to downstream ecosystems, cities, agricultural and recreational water users.

In a prepared statement, the River District's general manager, Andy Mueller, struck a slightly more optimistic tone.

"While the timing of federal funding to secure the Shoshone water rights remains uncertain, the River District is encouraged by key appointments within the Department of the Interior," Mueller said. "We are prepared to work closely with the next Bureau of Reclamation commissioner to advance this critical effort and other essential water projects that protect agriculture and the communities that rely on it — both in Colorado and across the basin."

*This story is provided by Aspen Journalism, a nonprofit, investigative news organization covering water, environment, social justice and more. Visit [aspenjournalism.org](https://www.aspenjournalism.org).*

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