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OIL AND WATER

McCamley Calls for Delay in Otero Mesa Oil Drilling; Challenges Congressman Pearce to Follow Suit

(Las Cruces, NM) – June 8, 2007. Today, Doña Ana County Commissioner and Democratic Congressional Candidate Bill McCamley endorsed a resolution supporting postponement of leasing the Otero Mesa for oil and gas drilling until a study of the water underneath it is complete.

“As everyone knows, oil and water just don’t mix,” said McCamley. “Water is the essential element for life, and it’s the lifeblood of future growth in Southern New Mexico. Although oil is a major contributor to our economy, in the desert we cannot exist without a ready supply of water. We should slow down, take a step back, and examine the Otero Mesa as a potential source of fresh water. This resolution urges the Bush Administration to put New Mexico’s future first by putting the brakes on the rush to drill.”

Opposition to the Bush Administration’s drilling plan enjoys bipartisan support among most of New Mexico’s Congressional delegation. Democratic Senator Jeff Bingaman and Representative Tom Udall are joined by Republican Senator Pete Domenici in asking the Bush administration to put off leasing the land for oil drilling until further studies have been completed. Conspicuously silent in the call to postpone drilling is Otero Mesa’s own Congressman, Steve Pearce.

“This is one issue where the Congressman should put away his rubber stamp, stand up to the Bush Administration, and put New Mexico first. This is not a partisan issue. It’s a matter of doing what’s best for New Mexico. I call on Congressman Pearce to join the bi-partisan chorus of voices challenging the Bush Administration to put off drilling and to protect our water supply.”

According to the Southwest Environmental Center and a 2006 federal study, there is enough gas under the Otero Mesa for a 16-day national supply. There is approximately 48.9 trillion gallons of potable water under the Mesa, enough to supply a million people for more than a decade.

McCamley said, “If Congressman Pearce truly believes that water is precious and must be preserved, as he has written on his own website, then he must take a stand on this vital issue.”

Doña Ana County Commissioners will vote on the resolution on Tuesday, June 13th.