



For Immediate Release  
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## **Governor Bill Richardson Reacts to Federal Court Victory on Otero Mesa**

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson applauded the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeal’s unanimous decision today to require the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to take a hard look at the potential adverse impacts from oil and gas drilling on Otero Mesa.

“This is a major boost in our fight to protect one of New Mexico’s most ecologically valuable and unique places,” Governor Bill Richardson said. “I am pleased that the courts share our steadfast position that the public must have a voice in decisions affecting oil and gas leasing on Otero Mesa.”

The Tenth Circuit Court upheld a previous ruling in federal district court that the BLM could not issue a new lease without further National Environmental Policy Act requirements.

Otero Mesa, which encompasses approximately 1.2 million acres of Chihuahuan Desert, is a unique ecosystem that is home to rare desert grasslands, herds of pronghorn, prairie dog villages, mule deer, aplomado falcons and more than 345 of the world’s 1,500 cacti species. Otero Mesa is the last remnant of the Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem in our country.

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