



**Coalition for the Valle Vidal**  
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## **Report Finds Drilling Valle Vidal is a Bust for Local Economies**

*Taos, New Mexico* – A report released today by the Coalition for the Valle Vidal confirms drilling the Valle Vidal will undermine Colfax County's local economy. The group is calling on New Mexico's congressional leaders to move quickly to permanently protect the area and remove the threat of Forest Service leasing.

"The Valle Vidal makes Colfax County unique and it's a critical piece of our economic equation," said Colfax County Commissioner, James Marchetti. "Drilling it is shortsighted, it destroys the very reason why our children want to stay here and others want to relocate, retire and visit here."

The report, "*Local Economic Impacts of Gas Development in Valle Vidal, New Mexico*," reviews economic trends in Colfax and Las Animas (Colorado) counties and the projected level of gas development for the Valle Vidal based on a recent Carson National Forest document (RFDS). The report finds growing economic sectors in Colfax County include service, retirement and recreation activities. Additionally, gas development on the Valle Vidal will bring insignificant jobs or revenues to the area, while simultaneously threatening existing, robust sectors.

Other key findings are:

- Drilling the Valle Vidal will be a net economic loss for the communities of northern New Mexico. Recreation on the Valle Vidal currently generates anywhere from \$2-5 million dollars to local economies. Income generated from coalbed methane (CBM) drilling will not offset that loss.
- Job creation from drilling the Valle Vidal will add less than one percent to area employment figures, if that. Further, many recreation-based jobs could be lost.
- Many of these jobs will not be available to local residents due to the specialized workers upon which the oil and gas industry typically relies.

- Any revenues generated to local governments will be offset by the burden that the oil and gas industry brings to county roads, fire and other emergency responders, and other services.
- Past job losses in Colfax County resulting from the end of mineral extraction activities do not correlate with declines in employment in other sectors of Colfax County's economy.

Area Chamber of Commerce organizations and public officials from both Colfax and Taos areas agree the report's finding reflect critical community realities. Tracy Boyce, former president of Cimarron Chamber of Commerce, says "The Valle Vidal brings millions every year into our economies. That money is coming from wildlife watching, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, camping. All of these people spend money on the way to and from the Valle Vidal. We can't afford to lose that."

Don Francisco Trujillo II, Taos County Commissioner and Chairman of the Intergovernmental Council of the Enchanted Circle in northern New Mexico, says that Taos does not have anything to gain and has everything to lose from the drilling. "I come from a long standing, time honored family whose love for the land runs deep in our roots and flows through our veins. Our protected public lands are our lifeline to a sustainable future. More and more we are seeing that communities that protect their public lands are benefiting economically."

The Coalition for the Valle Vidal and others are increasingly insisting that these types of debates are not stark, limited choices between jobs and the environment. Referring to a different comprehensive study by the nonprofit Sonoran Institute Jim O'Donnell says, "You destroy the environment you lose your jobs. Period. Sound economic studies of rural western communities are showing time and again that protecting public lands create thriving and sustainable rural communities. Today's findings show that the same is true for Colfax and Taos counties."

The report was submitted today to the Carson National Forest along with materials by the Coalition for the Valle Vidal. The report, summary and related materials available at: [www.valle.vidal.org/about.html](http://www.valle.vidal.org/about.html).

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