

**RESOLUTION NO. 09-048**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PERMANENT PROTECTION OF OTERO MESA'S LAND, WILDLIFE, AND WATER RESOURCE FROM OIL AND NATURAL GAS DRILLING.**

The City Council is informed that:

**WHEREAS**, Otero Mesa contains one of the largest intact grasslands remaining in the Chihuahuan Desert, and provides important habitat for many plant and animal species, including pronghorn, mule deer, mountain lions, prairie dogs, the endangered Aplomado Falcon, and more than 200 other bird species; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salt Basin aquifer lying underneath Otero Mesa is estimated to be one of the largest untapped fresh water aquifers in the region and may contain as much as 57 million acre feet of water according to the U.S. Geological Survey; and

**WHEREAS**, the Salt Basin is a potential future source of drinking water for communities in the region; and

**WHEREAS**, Otero Mesa's public lands provide outstanding opportunities for hiking, birdwatching, hunting and other types of outdoor recreation for the citizens of the region; and

**WHEREAS**, Otero Mesa's grasslands, wildlife, and water are potentially threatened by natural gas and oil development; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Mexico Oil Conservation Division has documented 1400 incidents of groundwater contamination caused by oil and gas activities since 1990; and

**WHEREAS**, the Dona Ana and Sierra County Commissions have passed resolutions supporting a moratorium on oil or natural gas drilling until a detailed study of the Salt Basin aquifer can be completed; and

**WHEREAS**, Otero Mesa's reserves of natural gas are unproven and not likely to be significant; the Bureau of Land Management has estimated the possible gas reserves in and around Otero Mesa and the Salt Basin aquifer to be low to moderate and significantly less than in other parts of the region with commercially viable reserves; and

**NOW THEREFORE**, Be it resolved by the governing body of the City of Las Cruces that:

(I)

THAT the City of Las Cruces would like to support the protection of Otero Mesa's land, wildlife, and water resource from oil and natural gas drilling.


(II)

THAT the City calls on the United States Congress to introduce legislation that will provide permanent protection for Otero Mesa.

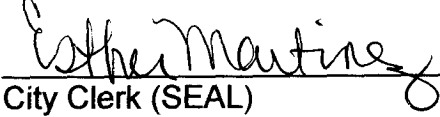
(III)

THAT the City work together to protect the unique and irreplaceable grasslands, wildlife and water from oil and natural gas exploration.

DONE AND APPROVED THIS 18th day of August, 2008

  
Ken Miyagishima, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
City Clerk (SEAL)

VOTE:

Mayor Miyagishima: Aye

Councillor Silva: Aye

Councillor Connor: Absent

Councillor Archuleta: Aye

Councillor Small: Aye

Councillor Jones: Aye

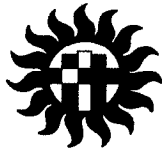
Councillor Thomas: Aye

Moved by: Jones

Seconded by: Archuleta

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

  
City Attorney



# City of Las Cruces<sup>®</sup>

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

Executive Summary for August 18, 2008

ITEM NUMBER: 11 Resolution/Ordinance Number: 09-048 Council District       

**TITLE: A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PERMANENT PROTECTION OF OTERO MESA'S LAND, WILDLIFE, AND WATER RESOURCE FROM OIL AND NATURAL GAS DRILLING.**

**STAFF CONTACT:** Rosa H. Aranda, Executive Assistant to the City Manager,  
Administration, 541-2076

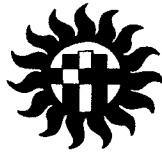
**BACKGROUND:**

**Purpose(s) of Action:** To protect Otero Mesa's land, wildlife, and water resource from oil and natural gas drilling.

**Key Issues/Contributing Factors:** The Otero Mesa provides important habitat for many plant and animal species. The Salt Basin aquifer located underneath Otero Mesa is a potential future source of drinking water for communities in the region.

**COUNCIL OPTIONS:**

1. Approve the Resolution in support of protect Otero Mesa's land, wildlife, and water resources from oil and natural gas drilling.
2. Disapprove Resolution and decline participation of the protection of Otero Mesa's land, wildlife, and water resources from oil and natural gas drilling.



# City of Las Cruces<sup>®</sup>

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

## Council Action Form

For Meeting of August 18, 2008  
(Adoption Date)

**TITLE:**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF PERMANENT PROTECTION OF OTERO MESA'S LAND, WILDLIFE, AND WATER RESOURCE FROM OIL AND NATURAL GAS DRILLING.**

**BACKGROUND:**

Otero Mesa contains one of the largest intact grasslands remaining in the Chihuahuan Desert, and provides important habitat for many plant and animal species. The Salt Basin aquifer lying underneath Otero Mesa is estimated to be one of the largest untapped fresh water aquifers in the region. The Salt Basin is a potential future source of drinking water for communities in the region. Otero Mesa's grasslands, wildlife, and water are potentially threatened by natural gas and oil development

The City of Las Cruces will join with the Dona Ana and Sierra County Commissions who have passed resolutions supporting a moratorium on oil or natural gas drilling until a detailed study of the Salt Basin aquifer can be completed.

**SUPPORT INFORMATION:**

1. Draft Resolution, Exhibit "A"

**COUNCIL OPTIONS:**

1. Approve the Resolution in support of protect Otero Mesa's land, wildlife, and water resources from oil and natural gas drilling.
2. Disapprove Resolution and decline participation of the protection of Otero Mesa's land, wildlife, and water resources from oil and natural gas drilling.

(Continue on additional sheets as required)

<b>Name of Drafter:</b> Rosa H. Aranda <i>[Signature]</i>		<b>Department:</b> Administration	<b>Phone:</b> 541-2076		
<b>Account Number</b>		<b>Amount of Expenditure</b>	<b>Budget Amount</b>		
No Economic Impact		N/A			
<b>Strategic Plan Goal / Objective / Strategy Addressed:</b> NA					
<b>Performance Budget Goal / Objective Addressed:</b> NA					
<b>Department</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Originating Department			Budget	<i>[Signature]</i>	2300
			Assistant City Manager	<i>[Signature]</i>	2271
Legal	<i>[Signature]</i>	2124	City Manager	<i>[Signature]</i>	2076