

## RESOLUTION

**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 US Geological Survey;

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

**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;

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

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

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

**WHEREAS**, the porous geology of the Salt Basin makes the aquifer particularly vulnerable to contamination by oil and gas activities;

**WHEREAS**, the Doña 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;

**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

**WHEREAS**, the City of El Paso wishes to protect Otero Mesa's grasslands, wildlife and water for the enjoyment and benefit of this and future generations.

CITY CLERK DEPT.  
JUN 23 PM 3:30

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:**

That the City of El Paso calls on the United States Congress to introduce legislation that will provide permanent protection for Otero Mesa's unique and irreplaceable grasslands, wildlife and water from oil and natural gas exploration.

**ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ day of June 2008.**

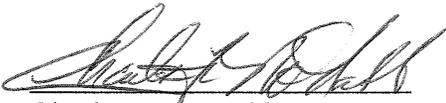
**THE CITY OF EL PASO**

\_\_\_\_\_  
John F. Cook  
Mayor

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richarda Duffy Momsen  
City Clerk

**APPROVED AS TO FORM:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles F. McNabb  
City Attorney

CITY CLERK DEPT.  
09 MAY 23 PM 3:30