

February 5, 2008

Jonathan Jemming
Public Lands Policy Analyst
Public Lands Policy Coordination Office
5110 State Office Building
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Mr. Jemming,

RE: Application #8853

On behalf of the board and staff of Dia Art Foundation, I am writing to adamantly oppose Pearl Montana Exploration & Production's application to drill exploratory boreholes in the North Arm of the Great Salt Lake in Utah.

The North Arm is home to Robert Smithson's artwork, *Spiral Jetty* (1970), one of the most widely recognized and cherished American sculptures of the late twentieth century, and perhaps the most iconic example of Land Art in the world. Dia acquired the *Spiral Jetty* as a gift from the artist's Estate in 1999 and today oversees its long-term preservation, including the protection of the surrounding environment. Smithson's sculpture is made of basalt rocks and earth taken from the site and formed into a massive 1500-foot-long coil that spirals into the Great Salt Lake. The expansive natural setting is integral to the artwork, providing an essential frame for experiencing Smithson's project.

Smithson's pioneering sculpture—made with bulldozers and earth—occupies an important place in art history, and has inspired both scholarly study and younger generations of artists. Visitors come from around the world to Rozel Point in Box Elder County to experience the *Spiral Jetty* which was conceived in relation to the specific geology and topology of its unique site. The fragile balance of earth, salt lake, and local flora and fauna, symbolized in the form and structure of the artwork, must be maintained to preserve the experience of the *Spiral Jetty* in this unique landscape.

Dia strenuously objects to the proposed drilling which will occur approximately 4 miles away from the *Jetty*. The drilling itself, and potential subsequent oil extraction, will disrupt the viewshed and the area's isolated character, and will degrade the natural environment of the lake by introducing barges with large-scale drilling equipment. Moreover, construction and operation will introduce toxins and chemicals to the delicate saline water and wetlands that surround the lake. In the case of a toxic spill, the proposed operation would cause irreparable damage to the lake environment and threaten the physical integrity of Smithson's extraordinary sculpture. Additionally, we are concerned about increased traffic and heavy transport on the rural road that leads to the *Spiral Jetty* through Golden Spike National Monument, and the potential for noise pollution from drilling and operations.

As stewards of the *Spiral Jetty*, Dia believes the State must seriously consider the detrimental effects that drilling will have on Robert Smithson's internationally acclaimed artwork. We urge you to deny the filing submitted by Pearl Montana Exploration &

Production, and any future filings in the North Arm of Great Salt Lake that similarly constitute a threat to the artwork and the surrounding environment. Should you have any questions regarding Dia's position, please feel free to contact directly at 212.293.5505 or jweiss@diaart.org, and thank you for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey Weiss', written in a cursive style.

Jeffrey Weiss
Director

cc: The Honorable Jon Huntsman, Jr., Governor of Utah
The Honorable Robert F. Bennett, United States Senate
The Honorable Senator Orrin G. Hatch, United States Senate
The Honorable Rob Bishop, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Peter C. Knudson, Utah State Senate
The Honorable Ronda Menlove, Utah House of Representatives