

COMMITTING LEASES FOR ENERGY ACCESS NOW ACT

MAY 20, 2026.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WESTERMAN, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 1687]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1687) to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to increase the frequency of lease sales, to require replacement sales, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act” or the “CLEAN Act”.

SEC. 2. GEOTHERMAL LEASING.

(a) ANNUAL LEASING.—Section 4(b) of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1003(b)) is amended—

- (1) in paragraph (2), by striking “2 years” and inserting “year”;
- (2) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively; and

- (3) after paragraph (2), by inserting the following:

“(3) REPLACEMENT SALES.—If a lease sale under paragraph (1) for a year is canceled or delayed, the Secretary of the Interior shall conduct a replacement sale during the same year.

“(4) REQUIREMENT.—Of the nominated parcels eligible for geothermal development and utilization under the resource management plan in effect for the State, the Secretary shall, in conducting a lease sale under paragraph (2), offer for lease—

- “(A) 75 percent of such nominated parcels; and

“(B) the remaining 25 percent of such nominated parcels, unless the Secretary provides a written justification that identifies a statutory, environmental, or administrative basis that prevents the Secretary from offering such nominated parcels for lease.”.

(b) DEADLINES FOR CONSIDERATION OF GEOTHERMAL DRILLING PERMITS.—Section 4 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1003) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) DEADLINES FOR CONSIDERATION OF GEOTHERMAL DRILLING PERMITS.—

“(1) NOTICE.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary receives an application for any geothermal drilling permit, the Secretary shall—

“(A) provide written notice to the applicant that the application is complete; or

“(B) notify the applicant that information is missing and specify any information that is required to be submitted for the application to be complete.

“(2) ISSUANCE OR DEFERRAL.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the Secretary has provided written notice to an applicant for a geothermal drilling permit that the application for such permit is complete pursuant to paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall—

“(i) issue the permit, if the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and other applicable law have been completed within such timeframe; or

“(ii) defer the decision on the permit and provide to the applicant a notice—

“(I) that specifies any steps that the applicant could take for the permit to be issued; and

“(II) that includes a list of actions that need to be taken by the agency to comply with applicable law, together with timelines and deadlines for taking such actions, which shall not exceed the deadlines specified in section 107(g) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336a(g)).

“(B) DEADLINE FOR DEFERRED DECISIONS.—If the Secretary defers a decision on a permit under subparagraph (A)(ii), the Secretary shall issue a decision on the permit not later than 10 days after the applicant takes any steps specified pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii)(I) and the agency takes the actions listed pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii)(II) in accordance with any applicable timelines and deadlines.”.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 1687 is to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to increase the frequency of lease sales, to require replacement sales, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (GSA) requires the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to hold “a competitive lease sale at least once every [two] years for land in a [s]tate that has nominations pending.”¹ The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), however, has often ignored this requirement. In California, for example, BLM failed to hold a competitive geothermal lease sale for nearly 11 years until the Trump administration held one in the summer of 2025.²

H.R. 1687, sponsored by Representative Russ Fulcher (R-ID-01), would relieve geothermal leasing and permitting backlogs by amending the GSA to require the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to hold annual lease sales for geothermal energy. The Secretary must offer at least 75 percent of nominated parcels if they

¹ Pub. L. No. 91-581.

² See “California Geothermal Energy,” Bureau of Land Management, <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/renewable-energy/geothermal-energy/regional-information/california>, accessed May 19, 2026.

are eligible for leasing under each state’s Resource Management Plan. If the Secretary fails to offer 75 percent of the nominated parcels, the Secretary must publish a justification identifying the legal, environmental, or administrative basis for the decision not to offer the remaining parcels. If a lease sale is missed for any reason, the bill requires the Secretary to hold replacement sales during the same year. The bill also requires the Secretary to respond to geothermal drilling permit applications within 30 days of receipt, informing applicants whether their applications are complete. If the Secretary determines an application is complete, then the Secretary has an additional 30 days to issue a final decision on the application. The bill allows agencies to defer issuing a final decision while still complying with all deadlines outlined in the Fiscal Responsibility Act. If an agency defers, it must provide applicants with a list of all necessary agency and applicant steps that must be taken before a final decision can be made. It directs the deferring agency to issue a decision on the permit within 10 days of both the applicant and the agency completing all necessary steps as outlined in the original permit deferral notice. The GSA currently lacks such permitting timelines, creating inefficiencies in the geothermal permitting process.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 1687 was introduced on February 27, 2025, by Representative Russ Fulcher (R-ID-01). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. On December 16, 2025, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on the bill. On April 21, 2026, the Committee on Natural Resources met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1687 by unanimous consent. Representative Russ Fulcher (R-ID-01) offered an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute designated Fulcher_01 ANS. The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute was agreed to by unanimous consent. The bill, as amended, was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held on December 16, 2025.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

- Designates the bill as the “Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act” or the “CLEAN Act”.

Section 2. Geothermal leasing

- Amends the GSA to require the Secretary to hold annual lease sales for geothermal energy, rather than once every other year.

- Requires the Secretary to hold replacement sales during the same year that a lease sale is missed.
- Directs the Secretary to offer at least 75 percent of nominated parcels and to publish, if such amount is not offered, a written justification identifying why the remaining parcels were not offered.
- Imposes deadlines on the Secretary to respond to geothermal drilling permit applications to let applicants know whether their applications are complete.
- Requires the Secretary to issue a final decision on the application within 30 days after determining it is complete.
- Allows the Secretary to defer issuing a final decision, provided that the Secretary offers applicants a complete list of necessary steps for both the applicants and the agency before a final decision can be issued.
- Directs the Secretary to issue a decision within 10 days after the applicant and agency complete all necessary steps outlined when the decision was deferred.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of House rule XIII and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of House rule XIII and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a budgetary analysis and a cost estimate of this bill.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to increase the frequency of lease sales, to require replacement sales, and for other purposes.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

An estimate of federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chair of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the Congressional Record upon its receipt by the Committee, if such estimate is not publicly available on the Congressional Budget Office website.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Directed Rule Making. This bill does not contain any directed rule makings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95-220, as amended by Public Law 98-169) as relating to other programs.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

GEOTHERMAL STEAM ACT OF 1970

* * * * *

SEC. 4. LEASING PROCEDURES.

(a) **NOMINATIONS.**—The Secretary shall accept nominations of land to be leased at any time from qualified companies and individuals under this Act.

(b) **COMPETITIVE LEASE SALE REQUIRED.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as otherwise specifically provided by this Act, all land to be leased that is not subject to leasing under subsection (c) shall be leased as provided in this subsection to the highest responsible qualified bidder, as determined by the Secretary.

(2) **COMPETITIVE LEASE SALES.**—The Secretary shall hold a competitive lease sale at least once every **[2 years]** *year* for land in a State that has nominations pending under subsection (a) if the land is otherwise available for leasing.

(3) **REPLACEMENT SALES.**—*If a lease sale under paragraph (1) for a year is canceled or delayed, the Secretary of the Interior shall conduct a replacement sale during the same year.*

(4) **REQUIREMENT.**—*Of the nominated parcels eligible for geothermal development and utilization under the resource man-*

agement plan in effect for the State, the Secretary shall, in conducting a lease sale under paragraph (2), offer for lease—

(A) 75 percent of such nominated parcels; and

(B) the remaining 25 percent of such nominated parcels, unless the Secretary provides a written justification that identifies a statutory, environmental, or administrative basis that prevents the Secretary from offering such nominated parcels for lease.

[(3)] (5) LANDS SUBJECT TO MINING CLAIMS.—Lands that are subject to a mining claim for which a plan of operations has been approved by the relevant Federal land management agency may be available for noncompetitive leasing under this section to the mining claim holder.

[(4)] (6) LAND SUBJECT TO OIL AND GAS LEASE.—Land under an oil and gas lease issued pursuant to the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.) or the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands (30 U.S.C. 351 et seq.) that is subject to an approved application for permit to drill and from which oil and gas production is occurring may be available for noncompetitive leasing under subsection (c) by the holder of the oil and gas lease—

(A) on a determination that geothermal energy will be produced from a well producing or capable of producing oil and gas; and

(B) to provide for the coproduction of geothermal energy with oil and gas.

(c) NONCOMPETITIVE LEASING.—The Secretary shall make available for a period of 2 years for noncompetitive leasing any tract for which a competitive lease sale is held, but for which the Secretary does not receive any bids in a competitive lease sale.

(d) PENDING LEASE APPLICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—It shall be a priority for the Secretary, and for the Secretary of Agriculture with respect to National Forest Systems land, to ensure timely completion of administrative actions, including amendments to applicable forest plans and resource management plans, necessary to process applications for geothermal leasing pending on the date of enactment of this subsection. All future forest plans and resource management plans for areas with high geothermal resource potential shall consider geothermal leasing and development.

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—An application described in paragraph (1) and any lease issued pursuant to the application—

(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), shall be subject to this section as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this paragraph; or

(B) at the election of the applicant, shall be subject to this section as in effect on the effective date of this paragraph.

(e) LEASES SOLD AS A BLOCK.—If information is available to the Secretary indicating a geothermal resource that could be produced as 1 unit can reasonably be expected to underlie more than 1 parcel to be offered in a competitive lease sale, the parcels for such a resource may be offered for bidding as a block in the competitive lease sale.

(f) LEASING FOR DIRECT USE OF GEOTHERMAL RESOURCES.—Notwithstanding subsection (b), the Secretary may identify areas in which the land to be leased under this Act exclusively for direct use of geothermal resources, without sale for purposes other than commercial generation of electricity, may be leased to any qualified applicant that first applies for such a lease under regulations issued by the Secretary, if the Secretary—

(1) publishes a notice of the land proposed for leasing not later than 90 days before the date of the issuance of the lease;

(2) does not receive during the 90-day period beginning on the date of the publication any nomination to include the land concerned in the next competitive lease sale; and

(3) determines there is no competitive interest in the geothermal resources in the land to be leased.

(g) AREA SUBJECT TO LEASE FOR DIRECT USE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), a geothermal lease for the direct use of geothermal resources shall cover not more than the quantity of acreage determined by the Secretary to be reasonably necessary for the proposed use.

(2) LIMITATIONS.—The quantity of acreage covered by the lease shall not exceed the limitations established under section 7.

(h) DEADLINES FOR CONSIDERATION OF GEOTHERMAL DRILLING PERMITS.—

(1) NOTICE.—*Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary receives an application for any geothermal drilling permit, the Secretary shall—*

(A) provide written notice to the applicant that the application is complete; or

(B) notify the applicant that information is missing and specify any information that is required to be submitted for the application to be complete.

(2) ISSUANCE OR DEFERRAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the Secretary has provided written notice to an applicant for a geothermal drilling permit that the application for such permit is complete pursuant to paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall—

(i) issue the permit, if the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and other applicable law have been completed within such timeframe; or

(ii) defer the decision on the permit and provide to the applicant a notice—

(I) that specifies any steps that the applicant could take for the permit to be issued; and

(II) that includes a list of actions that need to be taken by the agency to comply with applicable law, together with timelines and deadlines for taking such actions, which shall not exceed the deadlines specified in section 107(g) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336a(g)).

(B) DEADLINE FOR DEFERRED DECISIONS.—If the Secretary defers a decision on a permit under subparagraph (A)(ii), the Secretary shall issue a decision on the permit

not later than 10 days after the applicant takes any steps specified pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii)(I) and the agency takes the actions listed pursuant to subparagraph (A)(ii)(II) in accordance with any applicable timelines and deadlines.

* * * * *

ADDITIONAL VIEWS

H.R. 1687 would increase the frequency of geothermal lease sales on federal land, require replacement sales if any sale is canceled or delayed, require mandatory leasing of nominated parcels, and set deadlines for the consideration of geothermal drilling permit applications. I appreciate the majority for working with us to make some significant improvements to the legislation since the last Congress, including providing the Bureau of Land Management with additional flexibility in permit approval timelines. The majority also worked with us on improvements to create more flexibility in the provision requiring the leasing of all nominated parcels. While I appreciate that the legislation now requires leasing only 75 percent of nominated parcels to preserve some of BLM's discretion, I still have concerns that this may be insufficient discretion for BLM to manage its multiple-use and sustained-yield mandate.

I support House passage of H.R. 1687 and urge the Senate to consider additional improvements to the legislation.

JARED HUFFMAN,
Ranking Member.

