

to destroy this historic moment. We must work together to safeguard the unvarnished truth of our history.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7618, honoring our past and ensuring that our history remains intact for the next 250 years, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1530

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. KIGGANS), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 7618, the American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026.

I thank Chairman WESTERMAN, Chairman TIFFANY, and my bipartisan colleague, Congressman SETH MAGAZINER, for their support of this important legislation.

America's battlefields are more than historic sites. They are outdoor classrooms, living memorials, and sacred grounds where generations of Americans fought and sacrificed for our great Nation. Yet, many of these irreplaceable landmarks remain threatened by development and the passage of time.

H.R. 7618 reauthorizes the American Battlefield Protection Program through fiscal year 2036, streamlines and improves the flexibility of existing battlefield interpretation and restoration grants, and directs the National Park Service to evaluate significant sites associated with the French and Indian War and the Mexican-American War to help inform future preservation efforts. These changes will help ensure future generations can learn from and experience the places where our Nation's history was made.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the United States, preserving these hallowed grounds is one of the most meaningful ways we can honor the Americans who came before us and pass their stories on to those who will follow.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, Representative KIGGANS' bill is a practical step to keep a proven program working and to prevent further loss of historic battlefields across America.

We are not creating something new. We are building on a program with a track record of success so that it can continue to deliver results. If we do not act, more of these hallowed grounds will be lost to time. This bill ensures that those landscapes are conserved and able to tell the full story of our Nation for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7618, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

#### LICENSE TO DRILL ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7831) to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to extend the period of time during which the Secretary of the Interior is required to collect a fee for each new application for a permit to drill, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 7831

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "License to Drill Act".

#### SEC. 2. BLM OIL AND GAS PERMIT PROCESSING FEE.

Section 35(d) of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 191(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking "2026" and inserting "2037";

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by striking "Of the fees collected under this subsection for a fiscal year, the" and inserting "The"; and

(B) by striking "transfer—" and all that follows through "the Fund" and inserting "transfer, for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2037, all of the fees collected under this subsection for each such fiscal year to the BLM Permit Processing Improvement Fund"; and

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking "2026" and inserting "2037".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. STANSBURY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on H.R. 7831, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7831, the License to Drill Act, sponsored by Representative KENNEDY of Utah.

Since its creation under the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the Permit Processing Improvement Fund, or PPIF, has been a critical tool for the Bureau of Land Management. Congress created this program to provide BLM with the resources necessary to process Applications for Permits to Drill, or APDs, in a timely manner. To support that effort, Congress authorized an APD application fee to help fund the PPIF and reduce permitting delays.

Over the years, BLM has relied on the PPIF to ensure APDs are processed consistently and efficiently. While past administrations have not always maintained a satisfactory APD approval record, the PPIF has served as a reliable backstop, helping maintain continuity and staffing at BLM field offices.

Under President Trump, Secretary Burgum's Department of the Interior has approved 63.7 percent more Federal and Indian drilling permits than the previous administration had approved during an equivalent period of time in office. In fact, President Trump's BLM has approved 6,027 new oil and gas permits and more APDs than any other year over the past 15 years.

Just last month, the Department of the Interior generated over \$4 billion in total receipts from a BLM oil and gas lease sale in New Mexico and Texas under the Working Families Tax Cut Act. That is four times the previous record. This commendable performance demonstrates strong demand for domestic energy production on Federal lands, the Trump administration's success in unleashing American energy, and House Republicans' commitment to responsible management of our natural resources and lowering American energy prices.

H.R. 7831 reauthorizes the APD fee program. The fees, which are paid when submitting an application to drill, are deposited into the PPIF and used by the BLM to support application review and permitting activities. Since the implementation of these fees, operators and industry stakeholders have observed more reliable and timely permit approvals, prompting their strong support for the fees as good policy.

H.R. 7831 takes an important step toward maintaining a predictable, efficient, and durable permitting framework for oil and natural gas development on Federal lands. Reauthorizing fees for oil and gas drilling permits will help ensure that BLM has the resources necessary to process the permits needed to unleash American energy.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 7831, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7831, the License to Drill Act.

This bill would reauthorize a commonsense permitting program, allowing the Bureau of Land Management to continue collecting fees with applications for permits to drill oil and gas wells.

These fees go into the Permit Processing Improvement Fund, which funds the expert staff responsible for processing drilling permits, conducting inspections, and ensuring compliance with environmental laws.

Studies have consistently found that understaffing at agencies is one of the most common causes of permitting delays. Funding expert agency staff, as the Permit Processing Improvement Fund does, is the simplest solution to speeding up permitting without cutting corners on safety.

Without this bill, BLM's authority to collect these fees will expire at the end of this year. Allowing this authority to expire would have serious consequences for staffing and permitting efficiency, especially given the devastating cuts to the Federal workforce that have been undertaken by this administration.

I urge support for this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. KENNEDY), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mr. KENNEDY of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chair WESTERMAN and his outstanding staff for their help in getting this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, the License to Drill Act. This bill ensures the Federal Government has the operational resources to process energy permits efficiently without unnecessary delay.

Every American takes part in an electrified economy, whether they choose to or not, and right now that economy is facing a critical point. We are heading toward a severe energy deficit.

We possess the most dynamic economy in the world, but every single engine of that economy runs on power. We need more of it every year to build, manufacture, and to put people to work, yet much of our existing generating capacity is at the end of its useful life. As those plants go offline, our energy deficit worsens.

We cannot close an energy gap this massive with wishful thinking. We must take practical steps to meet demand because meeting demand is how we keep energy affordable for working families.

The answer isn't to bet everything on a single source. The answer is an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We have already proven that this works. Just last year, the United States produced more energy than at any point in its history, hitting record highs in oil, natural gas, and renewables simultaneously, but when one source is choked off, everyday Americans pay the price.

Producing that energy requires the capacity to efficiently permit it. Right now, a single permit can sit for months, not because the technology or industry isn't ready, but because the Federal Government often lacks the ability to keep up.

Let's be clear: Cutting red tape is not about cutting corners on safety. It is

about speeding up our bureaucracy. We can maintain rigorous oversight without ensuring years of needless delay. Every day a permit sits idly on a bureaucrat's desk is a day that costs American jobs, drives up utility bills, and hands global leverage to our adversaries.

My License to Drill Act will extend a proven, bipartisan program that has successfully cleared permit backlogs since 2004. By utilizing an industry-funded fee model, energy companies foot the bill for the administrative costs of these reviews. This means faster approvals, smaller backlogs, and more American energy, all without costing the taxpayers a single dollar.

The License to Drill Act is a commonsense step in the right direction. Let's keep American energy moving forward. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

□ 1540

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. STAUBER), who is also the chair of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources.

Mr. STAUBER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 7831, the License to Drill Act; H.R. 1687, the CLEAN Act; and H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act, three good, bipartisan bills that were put forth by my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee.

Now more than ever, the United States needs to be bringing more energy online to drive our 21st century economy.

These bills will help guarantee we have durable, proenergy policy no matter who is in the White House. These pieces of legislation will provide much-needed certainty for domestic energy producers, ensuring leaseholders will be able to responsibly produce on Federal lands, including onshore oil and gas and geothermal energy development.

Representative KENNEDY's bill will reauthorize the BLM's authority to collect permit processing fees for oil and gas drilling permits and direct these fees toward processing the permits. This will help ensure that producers will actually have the ability to produce oil and gas on Federal lands, rather than sit in limbo for months or even years on end waiting for paperwork to be processed.

Representative FULCHER's bill will require BLM to hold annual lease sales for geothermal development on Federal lands. It also imposes deadlines for the BLM to process geothermal drilling permits, which again, will ensure these energy producers will actually be able to produce on the Federal leases they are issued.

Representative HURD's bipartisan package of geothermal bills will build

on this by enacting a series of reforms that will streamline the permitting of and collection of Federal royalties for geothermal projects on Federal lands.

Ultimately, all three of these bills will bring more energy online faster, increase our strategic national security by lessening our dependence on foreign adversarial nations, and most importantly, lower costs for the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee for their work on these bills, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this package of good, bipartisan legislation.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I, again, urge my colleagues to support the License to Drill Act.

America has some of the richest energy resources in the world, and House Republicans are working alongside the Trump administration to put those resources to work.

I, again, thank Representative KENNEDY for his diligent work on this issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7831.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### COMMITTING LEASES FOR ENERGY ACCESS NOW ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass 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, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1687

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### 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.*