

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.

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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.

“(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.”.

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 have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material to H.R. 1687, 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.

I rise today in support of H.R. 1687, the Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act, or the CLEAN Act.

Introduced by Representative FULCHER, this bill is essential to bolstering geothermal energy production. Across the United States, the Bureau of Land Management is responsible for geothermal permitting on roughly 245 million acres of public land. The previous administration, however, was unwilling to hold lease sales at the rate necessary to support the industry and lower energy costs for Americans.

Thankfully, President Trump and Secretary Burgum understand the need for abundant, low-cost, reliable energy sources and have made expanding domestic energy production a priority. Under their leadership, BLM has begun promoting annual geothermal lease sales.

Representative FULCHER’s CLEAN Act codifies these annual lease sales into law and furthers prudent efforts to secure American energy dominance for generations to come.

In October 2025, the BLM held a geothermal lease sale in Nevada that brought in a record-setting \$9.4 million in bids. Similarly, the BLM’s geothermal lease sale in California last August netted over \$2.7 million across just 13 parcels of land. These revenues help fund other important functions of the Bureau, including mapping, permitting, scientific research, and conservation.

In addition to requiring annual lease sales, the bill sets clear expectations and deadlines for geothermal permitting. By implementing transparent, predictable, and timely reviews, the CLEAN Act incentivizes further investment and helps meet the Nation’s rapidly rising energy demands.

During committee markup, the bipartisan CLEAN Act was unanimously approved with an amendment reflecting meaningful collaboration among Democrats, Republicans, the Department of the Interior, and industry.

The bill’s commonsense approach to incentivizing domestic geothermal energy investment and helping everyday Americans lower their monthly electric bills is a crucial step that Congress should not hesitate to take.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1687, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may concern.

The CLEAN Act is designed to speed up geothermal leasing and permitting, which we support. It would add a 30-day deadline for the Secretary to issue geothermal permits to drill if all environmental reviews have been completed.

The CLEAN Act would also require the Department of the Interior to hold lease sales once a year instead of every 2 years. The current leasing schedule means that geothermal developers can wait for years just for the chance to lease public lands, creating delays in getting clean, reliable energy to American communities.

This faster leasing schedule only applies to States where developers have

expressed interest in geothermal leasing, so it won’t make extra work for field offices that have no reason to do this work.

I thank the bill’s sponsor and my colleagues across the aisle for working with the Natural Resources Committee Democrats to retain important agency discretion in which public lands are leased.

The bill, as originally drafted before these revisions, required that the Department of the Interior offer a lease to every piece of public land that the industry expressed an interest in. That old language mirrored language that passed in the big, ugly bill for oil and gas, requiring the Secretary to offer to lease all the public lands that any industry would want.

It doesn’t matter if that meant allowing drilling next to a drinking water source like Colorado’s Aurora Reservoir or the destruction of beloved trails like a popular trail in North Dakota’s Badlands.

Since the passage of the big, ugly bill, BLM has put up public lands for leasing in both of these areas, creating local backlash. Geothermal drilling is certainly less dangerous than oil and gas, but there are still risks and places that are inappropriate to lease for environmental, cultural, and other reasons.

Natural Resources Committee Democrats have worked across the aisle in good faith to make a compromise, which will allow BLM to lease most of the industry-nominated public lands but allows the Secretary to choose not to lease lands for legal or environmental reasons.

□ 1550

We can speed up the build-out of clean, reliable geothermal energy without sacrificing special places and community support.

While I recognize that this bill still contains controversial provisions, including the requirement that 75 percent of nominated parcels for geothermal development be leased, we are encouraged by the reduction of that threshold.

Committee Democrats are urging the Senate to carefully consider the legislation and prioritize a balanced approach to managing our public lands, one that prioritizes responsible management of public lands for our communities and for the environment.

Mr. Speaker, Committee Democrats urge our colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, most of America’s geothermal resources lie beneath Federal lands, and interest in leasing those areas continues to grow. It is imperative that we increase the frequency of geothermal lease sales from every 2 years to annually and further streamline the permitting process. Doing so will help keep energy costs low and keep America’s lights on.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud Representative FULCHER for his work on this important legislation which I urge my colleagues to support, 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. 1687, as amended.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GEOHERMAL ENERGY ADVANCEMENT ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5631) to appoint a Geothermal Ombudsman and establish a Geothermal Permitting Task Force from within the Bureau of Land Management, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5631

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 "Geothermal Energy Advancement Act".

SEC. 2. EFFECT OF PENDING CIVIL ACTIONS ON PROCESSING APPLICATIONS RELATED TO GEOHERMAL LEASING.

Section 4 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1003) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(h) EFFECT OF PENDING CIVIL ACTIONS ON PROCESSING APPLICATIONS RELATED TO GEOHERMAL LEASING.—

"(1) REQUIREMENT TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS.—Notwithstanding the existence of any pending civil action that affects an application for a geothermal drilling permit, sundry notice, notice to proceed, right-of-way, or any other authorization under a valid existing geothermal lease, the Secretary shall, unless a United States Federal court vacates or provides injunctive relief for the applicable geothermal lease, geothermal drilling permit, sundry notice, notice to proceed, right-of-way, or other authorization, approve and issue, or deny, each such application not later than 60 days after completing all requirements under applicable Federal laws and regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and division A of subtitle III of title 54, United States Code.

"(2) NO NEW AUTHORITY FOR FEDERAL COURTS.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as modifying any existing authority of a Federal court to vacate or provide injunctive relief for a geothermal lease, geothermal drilling permit, sundry notice, notice to proceed, right-of-way, or other authorization.

"(3) DEFINITION OF AUTHORIZATION.—In this subsection, the term 'authorization' means any license, permit, approval, finding, determination, or other administrative decision issued by a Federal agency, or any interagency consultation, that is required or authorized under Federal law or regulations in order to site, construct, reconstruct, or com-

mence operations of a geothermal project administered by a Federal agency."

SEC. 3. COST RECOVERY FROM GEOHERMAL LEASING, PERMITTING, AND INSPECTIONS.

Section 6 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1005) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(j) COST RECOVERY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—During the period that begins on the date of enactment of this subsection and ends September 30, 2033, the Secretary may require an applicant for, or a holder of, a geothermal lease to reimburse the United States for all reasonable administrative and other costs incurred by the United States from—

"(A) processing the application for the geothermal lease, including any application for an operations plan, geothermal drilling permit, utilization plan, site license, facility construction permit, commercial use permit, and any other approval associated with a geothermal lease; and

"(B) inspecting and monitoring—

"(i) geophysical exploration activities;

"(ii) the drilling, plugging, and abandonment of wells; and

"(iii) the construction, operation, termination, and reclamation of any well site or facility for the utilization of geothermal resources pursuant to the geothermal lease.

"(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining whether to require reimbursement under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider whether there is in existence a cooperative cost share agreement between the United States and the holder of a geothermal lease.

"(3) ADJUSTMENTS.—The Secretary may reduce the amount to be reimbursed under paragraph (1) if the Secretary determines—

"(A) that full reimbursement would impose an economic hardship on the applicant; or

"(B) that a less than full reimbursement is necessary to promote the greatest use of geothermal resources.

"(4) USE.—The amounts reimbursed under this subsection shall be credited to the currently applicable appropriation, account, or fund of the Department of the Interior as discretionary offsetting collections, and shall be available only to the extent provided in advance in appropriations Acts for—

"(A) processing the application for geothermal leases, including any application for operations plans, geothermal drilling permits, utilization plans, site licenses, facility construction permits, commercial use permits, and any other approval associated with geothermal leases; and

"(B) inspecting and monitoring—

"(i) geophysical exploration activities;

"(ii) the drilling, plugging, and abandonment of wells; and

"(iii) the construction, operation, termination, and reclamation of any well site or facility for the utilization of geothermal resources pursuant to geothermal leases."

SEC. 4. REPORT.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the geothermal industry and other stakeholders, shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate, and make publicly available on the website of the Department of the Interior, a report that includes—

(1) an assessment of how the amendments made by section 3 of this Act affected the Bureau of Land Management's geothermal program;

(2) any recommendations for reauthorization of section 6(j) of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, as added by this Act; and

(3) any other recommendations for updates to such section and the Bureau of Land Management's geothermal program.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing the report required in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior shall solicit facts or information from the geothermal industry and other stakeholders.

SEC. 5. PUBLICATION OF "GOLD BOOK" FOR GEOHERMAL OPERATIONS ON FEDERAL LANDS.

(a) IDENTIFICATION.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other relevant Federal agencies, shall identify standard procedures and guidelines for efficient and environmentally responsible geothermal leasing and permitting to the extent such standard procedures and guidelines are not addressed in the fourth edition of the Bureau of Land Management's "Surface Operating Standards and Guidelines for Oil and Gas Exploration and Development", commonly known as the "Gold Book" and last revised in 2007.

(b) PUBLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 270 days after identifying standard procedures and guidelines under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior shall publish an updated version of the Gold Book incorporating any changes necessary to support efficient and environmentally responsible geothermal leasing and permitting for use by the field offices of the Bureau of Land Management and geothermal operators.

(2) RENAMING GOLD BOOK.—The Secretary of the Interior shall rename the Gold Book to reflect the incorporation of standard procedures and guidelines related to geothermal development.

(c) CONSULTATION.—Before publishing an updated version of the Gold Book, the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with—

(1) other relevant Federal agencies, including field offices of the Bureau of Land Management; and

(2) outside stakeholders, including developers and other experts.

(d) INCLUSIONS.—Each updated version of the Gold Book shall include standard procedures and guidelines for ensuring the efficient review and approval of environmentally responsible geothermal development, including—

(1) exploration and geophysical operations;

(2) permitting lease operations;

(3) compliance with all applicable laws and regulations;

(4) construction and maintenance; and

(5) drilling, production, and utilization operations.

(e) PERIODIC REVISION.—The Secretary of the Interior shall—

(1) at least once every five years, review the most recent version of the Gold Book; and

(2) if determined necessary by the Secretary of the Interior to support efficient and environmentally responsible geothermal leasing and permitting, publish an updated version of the Gold Book.

SEC. 6. GEOHERMAL OMBUDSMAN AND PERMITTING TASK FORCE.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) GEOHERMAL AUTHORIZATION.—The term "geothermal authorization" means any license, permit, approval, finding, determination, or other administrative decision issued by the Bureau of Land Management and any interagency consultation that is required or authorized under Federal law in order to site, construct, reconstruct, or commence operations of a geothermal energy project administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

(2) GEOHERMAL ENERGY PROJECT.—The term "geothermal energy project" means a