

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

project wholly or partially located on public land that uses geothermal energy to generate heat or electricity.

(3) **PUBLIC LAND.**—The term “public land” means lands subject to geothermal leasing under section 3 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1002).

(4) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) **TASK FORCE.**—The term “Task Force” means the Geothermal Permitting Task Force established under subsection (c).

(b) **GEOTHERMAL OMBUDSMAN.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall appoint from within the Bureau of Land Management a Geothermal Ombudsman.

(2) **DUTIES.**—The Geothermal Ombudsman appointed under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) act as a liaison between—

(i) the individual field, district, and State offices of the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) the Division Chief of the National Renewable Energy Coordination Office of the Bureau of Land Management; and

(iii) the Director of the Bureau of Land Management;

(B) provide dispute resolution services between the individual field, district, and State offices of the Bureau of Land Management and applicants for geothermal authorizations;

(C) monitor and facilitate permit processing practices and timelines across individual field offices of the Bureau of Land Management;

(D) develop best practices for the permitting and leasing process for geothermal resources; and

(E) coordinate with the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council.

(c) **GEOTHERMAL PERMITTING TASK FORCE.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish within the Bureau of Land Management a Geothermal Permitting Task Force.

(2) **LEADERSHIP.**—The Task Force shall be headed by the Geothermal Ombudsman appointed under subsection (b).

(3) **PERMITTING SUPPORT.**—The Task Force shall support the duties of the Geothermal Ombudsman appointed under subsection (b).

(4) **CROSS-OFFICE PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—In their capacity as head of the Task Force, the Geothermal Ombudsman may coordinate with any Departmental bureau or office to assign personnel with relevant expertise to assist with completion of geothermal authorizations in field, district, or State offices other than the official duty station where such personnel are located if—

(i) the Departmental bureau or office determines that such assignment will not materially delay ongoing completion of authorizations within the office where the employee is located; and

(ii) approval is received from the head of the official duty station where the assigned employee is located.

(B) **ASSIGNED PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS.**—Department personnel assigned to assist with completion of geothermal authorizations under subparagraph (A) shall—

(i) work in-person full-time at an official Department office;

(ii) if necessary as determined by the Geothermal Ombudsman, travel to the Bureau of Land Management field, district, or State office with jurisdiction over the geothermal authorization to which the employee has been assigned by the Geothermal Ombudsman;

(iii) participate as part of the team of personnel working on geothermal authoriza-

tions to which the employee has been assigned by the Geothermal Ombudsman; and

(iv) regularly report to the head of the field, district, or State office of the Bureau of Land Management with jurisdiction over geothermal authorizations to which the employee has been assigned by the Geothermal Ombudsman.

(C) **RETENTION ALLOWANCES.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Geothermal Ombudsman may pay a retention allowance to an employee assigned to assist with the completion of geothermal authorizations under subparagraph (A). Retention allowances—

(I) shall be stated as the percentage of the rate of basic pay of an employee, and may not exceed 25 percent of such rate of basic pay;

(II) may not be considered to be part of the basic pay of an employee, and the reduction or elimination of a retention allowance may not be appealed; and

(III) shall be paid at the same time and in the same manner as the employee’s basic pay is paid.

(ii) **CONSIDERATIONS.**—In exercising the retention allowance authority described in clause (i), the Geothermal Ombudsman shall consider—

(I) an employee’s specialized expertise related to geothermal authorizations;

(II) the demonstrated need to retain an employee to meet the performance improvement objectives for geothermal authorization timelines and develop best practices for completion of geothermal authorizations; and

(III) the difficulty in recruiting or replacing qualified personnel with relevant expertise related to geothermal authorizations.

(D) **SAVINGS CLAUSE.**—Cross-office personnel assignments carried out under this paragraph shall not alter the underlying jurisdiction of other offices of the Bureau of Land Management over applicable geothermal authorizations.

(d) **REPORT.**—The Geothermal Ombudsman shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives an annual report that describes the activities of the Task Force and evaluates the effectiveness of geothermal permit processing during the preceding 1-year period.

**SEC. 7. GEOTHERMAL ROYALTIES.**

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—Section 2 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) ‘Geothermal electric generating facility’ means a facility, including all necessary equipment or structures (including turbines and cooling equipment), that produces electricity using geothermal resources. For purposes of section 5(a)(1), a facility described in the preceding sentence shall be considered a separate facility from any other such facility unless the facility shares a turbine with any other such facility.

“(i) ‘In-service date’ means, with respect to a geothermal electric generating facility, the date on which the geothermal electric generating facility begins operating.”

(b) **GEOTHERMAL ROYALTIES.**—Section 5(a)(1) of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1004(a)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A)—

(A) by inserting “with respect to a geothermal electric generating facility producing electricity from such resources,” before “not less than”;

(B) by inserting “by the geothermal electric generating facility” after “produced”; and

(C) by striking “the first 10 years of production under the lease” and inserting “each

year of the 10-year period following the in-service date of the geothermal electric generating facility”; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) by inserting “with respect to a geothermal electric generating facility producing electricity from such resources,” before “not less than”;

(B) by inserting “by the geothermal electric generating facility” after “produced”; and

(C) by striking “such 10-year period” and inserting “the period of 10 years described in subparagraph (A)”.

**SEC. 8. NEPA REVIEW.**

Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15942) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “, or the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) for the purpose of exploration or development of geothermal resources” after “or gas”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “or gas” and inserting “, gas, or geothermal”; and

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking “or gas” and inserting “, gas, or geothermal”.

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 add extraneous material on H.R. 5631, 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 strong support of H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act, sponsored by Representative HURD.

The United States has an abundance of natural resources, and many of these resources are found on Federal land throughout the country. There is one resource in particular that is uniquely positioned to help meet our growing energy demand in the Western United States, and that is geothermal energy.

The first geothermal project on Bureau of Land Management lands was approved in 1978. Since then, technological advancements and increased data collection have given geothermal projects significant momentum, and BLM lands have attracted strong interest from geothermal producers.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that the Great Basin Region alone holds about 135 gigawatts of next-generation geothermal potential. That is enough to power roughly 100 to 135 million homes.

Today, there are 51 operating power plants producing geothermal energy on BLM-managed public lands, with a combined installed capacity of more than 2.6 gigawatts.

Unfortunately, cumbersome leasing and permitting practices on Federal lands have prolonged project timelines and increased costs for geothermal developers. This is why I am pleased to support the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act.

This past December, during a legislative hearing, we heard from multiple witnesses who stressed the importance of commonsense measures that further exploration, provide timely lease sales, and enhance geothermal expertise within Federal agencies. This legislation includes provisions from six bipartisan bills that accomplish just that.

The Geothermal Ombudsman for National Deployment and Optimal Reviews Act, introduced by Representative HURD, will provide BLM with the needed staffing flexibility by appointing a geothermal ombudsman from within that agency who will coordinate among offices and assign expert personnel from across the Department of the Interior to assist with approvals as part of a newly formed Geothermal Permitting Task Force.

The Geothermal Gold Book Development Act, introduced by Representative ANSARI, directs DOI to identify and publish standard procedures and guidelines in a Gold Book for efficient and environmentally responsible geothermal leasing and permitting for use by BLM field offices and geothermal operators.

The Geothermal Royalty Reform Act, introduced by Representative KENNEDY, provides a much-needed fix to the royalty system for geothermal energy, ensuring fair cost distribution for new geothermal facilities on Federal land.

The Streamlining Thermal Energy through Advanced Mechanisms Act, or the STEAM Act, introduced by Representative LEE, extends categorical exclusions available to oil and gas activities to geothermal development.

The Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act, introduced by Representative OCASIO-CORTEZ, would authorize the BLM to establish fees for geothermal operators to offset permitting costs.

Lastly, the Geothermal Energy Opportunity Act, or the GEO Act, introduced by Representative MALOY, requires the BLM to follow through on its job of processing geothermal permits and authorizations unless a Federal court directs it to do otherwise.

Together, these reforms will help to release the heat below our feet and bolster American energy dominance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 5631, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act. This bipartisan package will deliver safe, clean, and reliable energy for the American people, helping to lower energy prices and meet growing electricity demand.

The bills in this package will let us make use of recent breakthroughs in geothermal technology that unlock gigawatts of clean domestic energy, helping get American families off of the fossil fuel roller coaster.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for working together to speed up the build-out of next-generation geothermal without sacrificing environmental or community protections.

These bills will help fund the experts needed to efficiently process permits, establish a specialized problem-solving ombudsman to coordinate and resolve permitting disputes, and to standardize best practices across field offices.

They will extend a streamlined permitting pathway available to oil and gas wells on already developed lands to geothermal development, give the Department of the Interior a deadline to issue authorizations after reviews are complete, and modify how royalties are collected to incentivize new developments on one lease.

All of these are commonsense reforms that safely speed up the build-out of clean, reliable energy, and I am proud to stand in support of this timely, bipartisan package.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing more from our bill's cosponsors, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HURD), who is the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. HURD of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act.

I begin by thanking my Republican colleagues Representatives LEE, MALOY, and KENNEDY and my Democratic colleagues Representatives ANSARI and OCASIO-CORTEZ for their partnership on this bipartisan legislation. At a time when Americans are often told Congress cannot work together across the aisle, this bill is proof that we still can.

Geothermal energy represents one of the most promising opportunities in America's energy future.

When we talk about geothermal energy in this bill, we are not talking about heating and cooling systems for individual buildings. We are talking about large-scale electricity generation from the heat miles beneath the Earth's surface, energy available around the clock and dispatched when the grid needs it.

It is American energy. It is always available. It strengthens grid reliability. It supplies reliable power for military installations, advanced manufacturing, and critical infrastructure. It can help meet growing energy demand without relying on foreign supply chains.

The good news is that the challenge facing geothermal energy today is not a lack of resources. It is not a lack of innovation. It is not technology. It is not lack of entrepreneurial spirit.

The challenge is process. It is red tape.

Geothermal projects can be complex and capital intensive. Now, this legislation does not solve every challenge facing the industry, but it addresses one of the challenges that Congress can solve: unnecessary delay, fragmented permitting, and regulatory uncertainty.

When projects spend years navigating regulatory uncertainty, these costs ultimately get built into the project. Greater certainty helps attract investment, accelerate deployment, and bring promising projects online more quickly.

Across the West, we have extraordinary geothermal potential, but permitting remains fragmented, timelines are uncertain, and expertise is often spread unevenly across the Federal Government.

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As a result, projects face delays that serve no one's interests.

This legislation takes a practical approach to solving those problems. It improves coordination. It increases certainty. It streamlines permitting. It helps ensure that expertise is available where it is needed. It also provides the tools necessary to move worthy projects through the process more efficiently while maintaining responsible environmental stewardship. In short, this bill helps the system work the way Congress intended it to work.

America has tremendous geothermal potential, but we have a deployment problem. The good news, though, is we can solve it. If we are serious about American energy security, American competitiveness, and American innovation, we should remove unnecessary barriers that prevent us from developing the resources that we already possess.

The future will require more electricity, more reliability, more domestic energy production. Geothermal can help meet that challenge. This legislation helps unlock that potential.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his invaluable help on this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 5631.

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and my colleague from Colorado for their leadership in this package.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a rare issue that is uniting Americans from the right, the left, and the center: geothermal energy. Particularly during a time when it too often can feel like Congress can't agree on anything, today's package is a stand-out in the best way.

As the United States continues to face increasing energy demand here at home and rising energy costs from abroad, fully harnessing our domestic

geothermal resources is more important than ever.

My home State of Nevada has been a pioneer of both conventional and next-generation geothermal energy, including as the site of the country's first enhanced geothermal plant.

With exciting and ongoing developments in the geothermal technology, the Department of Energy has estimated that America will be able to affordably capture enough of our abundant geothermal resources nationwide to power more than 65 million homes over the next 25 years.

Let me be clear: This is baseload, 24/7 clean energy, and that is why I am proud to co-lead the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act with Congressman HURD.

Our bipartisan package is the most significant geothermal legislation in more than a half a century since the foundational Geothermal Steam Act of 1970. I am thrilled that the package includes my STEAM Act, which I am proud to co-lead with Representative CELESTE MALOY and Senator CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO. The STEAM Act will ensure that the geothermal industry has the same flexibility to explore and develop on previously disturbed or studied public lands that the oil and gas industry has had for upwards of two decades. At long last, we will be leveling the playing field for this promising and proven 24/7 clean energy source.

Mr. Speaker, there is a reason that the STEAM Act and all six bills in the package unanimously passed out of the House Natural Resources Committee: It is because Members from all corners of the ideological spectrum know that geothermal can make a real difference.

The U.S. contains more than five terawatts of geothermal resources, enough to meet the electricity needs of the entire world. With energy costs going up, I have long said that we need to embrace an all-of-the-above approach to bring down these costs for hardworking Americans. This geothermal package and the homegrown energy that it supports will do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support our bipartisan, commonsense, and cost-saving legislation.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Utah (Mr. KENNEDY).

Mr. KENNEDY of Utah. Mr. Speaker, today, we have an opportunity to unlock one of America's greatest untapped energy resources and invest in our Nation's future.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act.

First, I thank Representative HURD, Chairman WESTERMAN, and my colleagues on the Natural Resources Committee, and the staff, theirs and mine, who put the work in to build this historic geothermal package. I am proud that my own bill, the Geothermal Royalty Reform Act, is being passed as

part of it, giving developers the regulatory certainty they need to build.

Geothermal is one of the most promising, untapped renewable energy resources on the planet, and no State is better positioned to lead the world into this frontier than the State of Utah, with more than 10 gigawatts of reliable power beneath it.

The Department of Energy projects that next-generation geothermal could provide 90 gigawatts of power nationwide by 2050, a 20 times increase, enough to power millions of homes while meeting our rising demand.

It is firm, baseload power, the kind that can keep the grid stable and energy affordable for working families. Energy costs are climbing, and families feel it every month. Geothermal can be part of the answer.

What is standing in the way? For too long, it was our own regulatory environment. Geothermal developers have been forced through a maze of outdated permitting and duplicative reviews. This bill will clear those obstacles instead of creating them.

Mr. Speaker, the resource is real, the technology is proven, and American industry is ready to build. The only thing holding us back now is Washington itself. This bill changes that and puts the clean power beneath our feet to work. Let's unlock American energy and deliver the reliable power this country runs on.

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 include in the RECORD six letters of support for the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act. These letters are from ClearPath Action, Corporate Energy Buyers Association, Enhanced Geothermal Systems Deployment Coalition, Geothermal Rising Action, Ormat Technologies, and Zanskar Geothermal & Minerals.

CLEARPATH ACTION,  
June 2, 2026.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,  
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

Hon. JARED HUFFMAN,  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WESTERMAN AND RANKING MEMBER HUFFMAN: On behalf of ClearPath Action, I write to express our strong support for two pieces of legislation under House floor consideration this week: H.R. 1687, the Committing Leases for Energy Access Now (CLEAN) Act and H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act. Together, these bipartisan bills will help unlock America's geothermal potential—delivering clean, firm, baseload power to meet surging electricity demand while advancing energy security.

ClearPath Action advocates for more clean energy innovation, modernized permitting and regulatory reform, America's global competitiveness for manufacturing, and unlocking more American resources. For over a decade, ClearPath Action has championed policies that harness the power of the private sector and reduce government red tape to deploy innovative American energy technologies, including next-generation geo-

thermal. Geothermal power remains an underutilized resource that is largely stranded on federal lands due to outdated and inefficient leasing and permitting regimes. The legislation before the House this week will take meaningful action to reduce these barriers and allow the technology to reach commercial scale.

The moment is ripe for action. A new wave of enhanced geothermal technologies is rapidly maturing, promising to extend geothermal to geologies far beyond traditional hotspots. Nearly 90 percent of U.S. geothermal resources are located on federal lands, yet the current leasing backlog and permitting uncertainty make it difficult for developers to plan and finance projects with confidence. The industry needs a permitting process that keeps pace with commercial ambition.

The CLEAN Act and the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act deliver exactly that. Passage of both bills would send a powerful signal that Congress is serious about unleashing domestic geothermal resources, diversifying America's clean energy supply, and ensuring that federal land management serves as a platform for American energy dominance rather than an obstacle to it.

ClearPath Action urges the House to pass both bills. We stand ready to work with the Committee, House leadership, and the Senate on additional steps to enact these measures into law. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

JEREMY HARRELL,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
ClearPath Action.

CEBA,  
June 1, 2026.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,  
Speaker of the House,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,  
Minority Leader,  
Washington, DC.

Re The Corporate Energy Buyers Association Supports H.R. 5631, The Geothermal Energy Advancement Act

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON AND LEADER JEFFRIES: On behalf of the Corporate Energy Buyers Association (CEBA) and our more than 320 member companies, I write to share our strong support for H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act. CEBA appreciates your leadership in bringing this bipartisan legislation to the House floor. We are also grateful to the bill's sponsors and the House Natural Resources Committee for developing a package that addresses real barriers to geothermal deployment. CEBA respectfully urges Members of the House to vote in favor of H.R. 5631.

As a business association representing the largest corporate clean energy buyers in the United States, CEBA strongly supports policies that will accelerate the development and deployment of low-cost, reliable, carbon emissions-free energy sources, including geothermal technologies.

Geothermal energy is an abundant, reliable electricity source that can help support increasing demand from economic growth, particularly in the West, while strengthening energy security. With a high capacity factor of about 90 percent geothermal power plants provide a steady output of baseload electricity to power large energy customers or support other renewable energy resources. While the U.S. has significant geothermal potential, the relatively nascent sector faces high upfront capital costs, investment barriers, and technological limitations that lawmakers are seeking to address. Passing the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act will accelerate the permitting process for

geothermal projects, addressing some of the major regulatory barriers hindering greater buildout.

CEBA is pleased to see significant bipartisan support for this legislation. We look forward to continuing our work with your offices and all members of Congress to advance commonsense geothermal permitting policies. Again, we respectfully urge House leadership to support passage of the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act and encourage your colleagues to vote in favor of the package when it is brought before the full House. Thank you for your leadership in working to ensure reliable, affordable, domestically sourced electricity for all Americans.

Sincerely,

RICH POWELL,  
CEO, CEBA.

EGS DC,  
June 1, 2026.

The Enhanced Geothermal Systems Deployment Coalition (EGS DC) encourages the U.S. House of Representatives to pass the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act (H.R. 5631) and the Committing Leases for Energy Access Now (CLEAN) Act (H.R. 1687).

The Geothermal Energy Advancement Act is a package of six bills that would modernize the federal geothermal leasing, permitting, and regulatory process, including:

Geothermal Energy Opportunity (GEO) Act (H.R. 301; Rep. Celeste Maloy, R-UT)

Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act of 2025 (H.R. 398; Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-NY)

Streamlining Thermal Energy through Advanced Mechanisms (STEAM) Act (H.R. 1077; Rep. Susie Lee, D-NV)

Geothermal Gold Book Development Act (H.R. 5617; Rep. Yassamin Ansari, D-AZ)

Geothermal Ombudsman for National Deployment and Optimal Reviews Act (H.R. 5631; Rep. Jeff Hurd, R-CO)

Geothermal Royalty Reform Act (H.R. 5638; Rep. Mike Kennedy, R-UT)

Together alongside the CLEAN Act, these bills would improve permitting timelines, establish clearer federal coordination, and provide greater certainty for geothermal project development, accelerating the responsible deployment of enhanced geothermal technologies nationwide.

This package represents the most significant geothermal legislative effort in years and reflects broad bipartisan recognition of geothermal energy's role in supporting reliable, domestic power generation. While testifying on this legislation, Fervo Energy CEO Tim Latimer emphasized that "the greatest barrier to geothermal growth isn't technology—its process. [...] With targeted reforms to environmental review and transmission permitting, geothermal can become a cornerstone of America's energy supply."

EGS DC supports passage of this package and encourages the Senate to act on this legislation and advance solutions that expand enhanced geothermal energy and strengthen American energy leadership.

GEOTHERMAL RISING ACTION,  
Re Support for H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act, and H.R. 1687, the CLEAN Act.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: On behalf of Geothermal Rising Action, an affiliate of the national trade association for the American geothermal industry representing over 100 organizational members, we urge a YES vote on H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act, and H.R. 1687, the Committing Leases for Energy Access Now (CLEAN) Act.

H.R. 5631 combines six bipartisan bills approved unanimously by the House Natural

Resources Committee: The Geothermal Ombudsman for National Deployment and Optimal Reviews Act; The Streamlining Thermal Energy through Advanced Mechanisms (STEAM) Act; The Geothermal Energy Opportunity (GEO) Act; The Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act of 2025; The Geothermal Gold Book Development Act; and The Geothermal Royalty Reform Act. Together with the CLEAN Act, this legislation addresses key barriers to geothermal development on federal lands by streamlining the permitting process, increasing the frequency of lease sales, improving agency coordination and best practices, and providing greater regulatory certainty for geothermal developers.

Geothermal energy operates 24/7 at over 90 percent capacity, has the smallest land footprint per megawatt-hour of any energy source, creates jobs using the same workforce and equipment as oil and gas, and can co-produce critical minerals essential for national security. Over 90 percent of discoverable geothermal resources are on federal lands. Federal permitting remains one of the most persistent bottlenecks to deployment, and this legislation provides practical, bipartisan solutions.

We respectfully urge the House to pass both bills and welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource to any Member or staff with questions about geothermal energy.

Sincerely,

CAITY SMITH,  
President, Geothermal Rising Action.

ORMAT,  
June 1, 2026.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,  
Democratic Leader, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

SPEAKER JOHNSON AND LEADER JEFFRIES: On behalf of Ormat Technologies Inc. (Ormat) I am writing in support of H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act.

Ormat is a vertically integrated global leader in geothermal power, energy storage, solar, and recovered energy generation. Headquartered in Reno, Nevada, Ormat is a leading geothermal company with more than 1,650 employees and over six decades of experience in the geothermal power business. Ormat is a vertically integrated company that designs, develops, manufactures, owns, and operates geothermal power plants all over the world, with a generating portfolio of 1.8 gigawatts. In Nevada, Ormat operates 14 facilities which produce 507 megawatts and employ more than 400 employees. This provides enough power for 325,000 homes, contributes more than \$30 million in operations, taxes, and royalties, and avoids 59 million metric tons of CO2 annually.

Ormat has extensive experience developing and producing renewable energy on public lands, with 22 operating facilities utilizing 338,855 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) leases in California, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, and Utah. In 2020 Ormat paid \$2.6 million in royalties and almost \$1 million in rentals to the BLM.

Ormat strongly supports the permitting reforms in the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act. Specifically, among other measures, the bill would (1) establish deadlines for the issuance of administrative permits that are necessary to commence operations after the environmental review for a geothermal energy project is complete; (2) ensure fair royalty treatment for leases that have multiple projects; and (3) establish a Geothermal Ombudsman at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to serve as a liaison between BLM field offices and the BLM Director and

develop best practices for geothermal energy leasing and permitting. All of these reforms would streamline the permitting process for geothermal development and would allow for more energy to be deployed on federal lands.

We strongly support this legislation and urge you to advance these reforms as expeditiously as possible.

Sincerely,

ERICA FREESE,  
Director, Business Development,  
Ormat Technologies Inc.

ZANSKAR,  
May 29, 2026.

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,  
Speaker, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

Hon. HAKEEM JEFFRIES,  
House Minority Leader, House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER JOHNSON AND MINORITY LEADER JEFFRIES: On behalf of Zanskar Geothermal & Minerals, Inc. ("Zanskar"), I write to express our strong support for the Advancing Geothermal Energy Act and the CLEAN Act. We appreciate the House Natural Resources Committee's bipartisan work to advance this practical package of reforms, and we urge the full House to pass these important bills.

Zanskar is an American energy technology company focused on discovering America's hidden geothermal resources and transforming them into baseload, clean power plants. We build artificial intelligence tools that map the Earth's subsurface with a level of precision that, just a decade ago, was considered impossible, and we deploy them through what we believe is the most significant field data collection and drilling campaign for geothermal in American history. Through this work, we are showing that the American age of geothermal discovery is just getting started, and that geothermal development can be systematic, repeatable, and scalable.

Unlocking our nation's geothermal frontier will require real partnership between the public and private sectors, and a practical policy framework to steward American geothermal development on federal lands. Today, developers may spend five to ten years navigating leasing and permitting processes before demonstrating whether a resource is commercially viable. This deters capital and strands projects that should be moving forward.

The bills in this package make practical, long-overdue reforms to help address these barriers, from permitting timelines and leasing consistency to royalty structures and interagency coordination. Together, they take important steps to create the policy framework needed to accelerate our efforts to discover and develop America's geothermal frontier.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We welcome the opportunity to serve as a resource to you and your staff as these efforts move forward.

Respectfully,

BEN BRENNER,  
Director of Federal Affairs,  
Zanskar Geothermal & Minerals, Inc.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Geothermal Energy Advancement Act. At a time when competition with China on AI and data centers is at an all-time high, we cannot afford to fall behind in power generation. Geothermal energy can provide reliable, baseload power throughout the West, as well as other parts of the country, and enhance American energy independence.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsors of the bill included in this bipartisan package for their work to bring this legislation to the floor, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOLDMAN of Texas). 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. 5631, as amended.

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

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to promote responsible geothermal energy development on public lands, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ALASKA'S RIGHT TO IVORY SALES AND TRADITION ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 254) to amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to protect the cultural practices and livelihoods of producers of Alaska Native handicrafts and marine mammal ivory products, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 254

*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 "Alaska's Right to Ivory Sales and Tradition Act" or the "ARTIST Act".

##### SEC. 2. ALASKA NATIVE HANDICRAFTS.

Section 101(b) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act Of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1371(b)) is amended to read as follows:

"(b) EXEMPTION FOR ALASKAN NATIVES.—

"(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

"(A) AUTHENTIC ALASKA NATIVE ARTICLE OF HANDICRAFTS AND CLOTHING.—The term 'authentic Alaska Native article of handicrafts and clothing' means an item composed wholly, or in some significant respect, of natural materials and that is produced, decorated, or fashioned in the exercise of traditional Alaska Native handicrafts by an Alaska Native who resides in Alaska and who dwells on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean without the use of a pantograph, multiple carvers, or any other mass copying device.

"(B) MARINE MAMMAL IVORY.—The term 'marine mammal ivory' includes a tooth or tusk from a walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*) or a species of cetacean.

"(C) TRADITIONAL ALASKA NATIVE HANDICRAFTS.—The term 'traditional Alaska Native handicrafts' includes weaving, carving, stitching, sewing, lacing, beading, drawing, and painting.

"(2) EXEMPTION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in section 109, the provisions of this Act shall not apply with respect to the taking of any marine mammal by any Alaska Native who resides in Alaska and who dwells on the coast of the North Pacific Ocean or the Arctic Ocean if such taking—

"(i) is for subsistence purposes; or

"(ii) is done for purposes of creating and selling authentic Alaska Native articles of handicrafts and clothing; and

"(ii) in each case, is not accomplished in a wasteful manner.

"(B) SPECIAL RULES.—

"(i) INTERSTATE COMMERCE OF ITEMS.—An item presented as an authentic Alaska Native article of handicrafts and clothing may be sold in interstate commerce only if it comports with the definition provided in paragraph (1)(A).

"(ii) EDIBLE PORTION OF MARINE MAMMAL.—Any edible portion of a marine mammal taken for the purpose of creating and selling authentic Alaska Native articles of handicrafts and clothing may be sold for native consumption or in a native village or town in Alaska.

"(3) LIMITATIONS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2), if, under this Act, the Secretary determines any species or stock of marine mammal subject to taking by Alaska Natives to be depleted, the Secretary may prescribe regulations upon the taking of such marine mammals by any Alaska Native described in this subsection.

"(B) CONTENT OF REGULATIONS.—The regulations described in subparagraph (A) may be established with reference to species or stocks, geographical area, the season for taking, or any other factors related to the reason for establishing such regulations and consistent with the purposes of this Act.

"(C) NOTICE AND HEARING; REMOVAL OF REGULATIONS.—The regulations described in subparagraph (A) shall be prescribed after notice and hearing required by section 103 of this title and shall be removed as soon as the Secretary determines that the need for their imposition has disappeared.

"(D) REGULATIONS TO BE SUPPORTED BY SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.—In promulgating any regulation or making any assessment pursuant to a hearing or proceeding under this subsection or section 117(b)(2), or in making any determination of depletion under this subsection or finding regarding unmitigable adverse impacts under subsection (a)(5) that affects stocks or persons to which this subsection applies, the Secretary shall demonstrate in writing (and make such writing publicly available on the website of the Secretary) that, in consideration of the whole record, including Indigenous knowledge, such regulation, assessment, determination, or finding is supported by substantial evidence.

"(E) APPLICABILITY.—The requirement under subparagraph (D) shall only be applicable in an action brought by one or more Alaska Native organizations representing persons to which this subsection applies.

"(4) PROHIBITIONS.—No State shall prohibit the interstate commerce, importation, sale, offer for sale, transfer, trade, barter, possession, or possession with the intent to sell, transfer, trade, or barter of marine mammal ivory or marine mammal bone or baleen incorporated under this title by an Alaska Native, into an authentic Alaska Native article of handicrafts and clothing.

"(5) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to—

"(A) impact the rights of any Indian Tribe (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)) in effect on the date of enactment of the Alaska's Right to Ivory Sales and Tradition Act; or

"(B) undermine any government-to-government consultation or engagement."

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 include extraneous material to S. 254, 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 in support of S. 254, Alaska's Right to Ivory Sales and Tradition Act, or the ARTIST Act.

Subsistence harvest of marine mammals is a key aspect of Alaska Native culture. Subsistence hunters harvest marine mammals for both food and to create Native handicrafts, clothing, and artwork.

Many of the millions of Americans that visit Alaska each year purchase these products. However, as States have enacted bans on ivory to prevent the trafficking of elephant tusks, these bans have been incorrectly applied to walrus ivory, a central component of the Alaska Natives' creations. The ARTIST Act fixes this longstanding issue by allowing Alaska Natives' handicraft and artworks to be sold in interstate commerce.

Ultimately, this bill recognizes the immeasurable ways in which Alaska Natives have contributed to the story of Alaska.

I thank Congressman BEGICH for his leadership on this important issue in the House and Senator SULLIVAN for his leadership in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, S. 254 would amend section 101(b) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which allows Alaska Native communities to take marine mammals for subsistence purposes.

This proposed amendment would allow Alaska Native communities to take marine mammals for the creation and sale of arts and crafts.

The MMPA already permits the use of marine mammal ivory in Alaska Native art when the animal was taken for subsistence. However, Alaska Native artists have faced barriers to markets due to State-level bans on the sale of ivory. They routinely used whale baleen, bones, and ivory walrus tusks in their artwork, which have been caught up in good faith efforts to curb the trade of elephant and rhinoceros ivory.

This bill would clarify that authentic Alaska Native art made with marine mammal products may be sold nationwide. This will provide greater flexibility and certainty to Alaska Native artists.

Importantly, this bill would maintain the Secretary's authority under