

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1332 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Oppose Oil and Gas Provisions in Budget Reconciliation

Dear Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Huffman, and Members of the Committee,

For decades, unchecked oil and gas development on U.S. public lands has occurred at the expense of taxpayers, ecosystems, wildlife, and public health. And now, the House Natural Resources Committee Majority is attempting to double down on de facto subsidies, pay-to-play schemes, and measures that silence the American public about the management of our shared lands and resources. Our nation's public lands are irreplaceable. They contain critical habitats and cultural resources while providing invaluable opportunities for conservation, recreation, and research.

The harmful language in this bill gives drilling and extraction primacy on our shared public lands over all other uses, despite [81 percent of BLM-administered lands in the West](#) already being open to oil and gas leasing. As organizations committed to protecting America's public lands, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to oppose the numerous harmful oil and gas provisions in the budget reconciliation bill that effectively hand public lands over to oil and gas executives, which include:

- Mandatory lease sales – at least four per year in Wyoming, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Nevada – until all national public lands proposed for leasing by oil and gas executives are offered for leasing.
- Gives oil and gas companies the ability to lease over 200 million acres of national public lands, as well as millions of acres of private lands with known federal subsurface minerals, anytime they want to at a nominal price.
- Reduces the royalty rate to what it was in 1920 and to half of what the states of New Mexico and Texas collect from drilling on state lands.
- Reimposes “noncompetitive” leasing on national public lands.
- Penalizes landowners, hunters and anglers, and other members of the public who want to participate in the decision-making process for national public lands, by imposing arbitrary fees to file a formal protest.
- Gives oil companies a statutory right to drilling permits for a nominal price while completely cutting the public out of the permitting process.
- Exempts millions of split-estate acres and thousands of wells from federal permitting, bonding, and mitigation requirements.
- Rescinds six land use plans for millions of acres of national public lands in CO, MT, ND, and WY that were based on years of public input and that include protections long sought by hunters, anglers, and local communities.

- Directs that drilling can proceed even when legal challenges are pending.

This bill prioritizes corporate profits over the American people, effectively transferring management and control of hundreds of millions of acres of national public lands to the oil and gas industry. At each of the three stages of approving oil and gas development on national public lands – land use planning, leasing, and permitting – it eliminates any semblance of meaningful environmental review and cuts the public, along with private landowners and neighboring communities, out of the decision-making process entirely.

The Inflation Reduction Act and BLM Oil and Gas Rule reforms modernized the antiquated federal oil and gas program and implemented GAO recommendations, giving taxpayers a fair return for the extraction of our public resources, protecting wildlife and cultural resources, and ensuring that oil and gas companies pay for cleaning up their toxic messes. Rolling back these critical reforms – which have the [overwhelming support of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats](#) from the states where most oil and gas leasing occurs – would hurt American taxpayers.

Research has shown that communities across the West have lost out on billions of dollars due to previously low fiscal rates and minimums. Clawing back these reforms would reduce the money that goes to local and state governments, while leaving hard-working taxpayers and families to foot the bill to clean up the oil and gas industry’s messes.

Communities want the public lands we enjoy to be protected as part of any approach to energy development – not unchecked oil and gas development that comes at the expense of outdoor recreation, local businesses, cultural areas, open land, wildlife, and our clean air and clean water.

Congress should not advance policy that removes all forms of checks and balances for one of the wealthiest industries in pursuit of speculative, unlikely revenue. We strongly urge you to reject these shortsighted oil and gas provisions that will fail to deliver meaningful revenue and will cheat taxpayers out of billions. **We urge you to oppose this bill** and stand with communities in the West and across the country who deserve public processes for national public lands and a fair taxpayer return on energy development.

Sincerely,

Accountable.US/Accountable.NOW
Animal Welfare Institute
Center for Biological Diversity
Change the Chamber
Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fund
Clean Water Action
Climate Action Campaign
Climate Hawks Vote
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks

Conservation Lands Foundation
Dayenu: A Jewish Call to Climate Action
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
Endangered Species Coalition
Friends of the Earth
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
GreenLatinos
Greenpeace USA
League of Conservation Voters
Los Padres ForestWatch

Natural Resources Defense Council
Nevada Wildlife Federation
Next 100 Coalition
Ocean Conservation Research
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Physicians for Social Responsibility
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Sierra Club
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

Turtle Island Restoration Network
Western Colorado Alliance
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