

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 27, 2018

Mr. Brian Steed  
Deputy Director, Policy & Programs  
Bureau of Land Management  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Deputy Director Steed:

Congress passed the Helium Stewardship Act (HSA) in 2013 with strong bipartisan support in order to reform the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) operation of the federal helium program. The HSA recognized the critical role helium plays in the fields of defense, space, medicine, and basic scientific research. Congress sought to maintain a steady supply of this vital resource to federal and non-federal users beyond the life of the Federal Helium Reserve (Reserve) and the Amarillo facility, and in the HSA mandated the development of a 20-year Federal strategy for securing access to helium after the disposal of the Reserve, which was provided to Congress in April 2016.

Unfortunately, major concerns remain regarding the future of the domestic helium market. As the single largest producer of helium in the world, uncertainty in the American market will have significant impacts on global supply. These concerns and impacts will grow until questions surrounding the future management and ownership of the Reserve are answered, which must be completed by September 30, 2021.

As we approach the end of Phase B of the HSA, it is critical that BLM provide additional details regarding the preparation for the disposal of the Reserve and the implementation of the Twenty-Year Federal Acquisition Strategy, so that both federal and non-federal helium users may experience a smooth transition to a fully-privatized helium market.


To ensure the orderly implementation of the final phases of the HSA and the uninterrupted access to helium by federal users, the Committee requests that the BLM and the General Services Administration (GSA) consult in a timely manner to produce clear and specific guidelines outlining the terms of sale of the Federal Helium Reserve assets, including projected deadlines of any actions necessary for the sale, and provide an update to Congress on the steps taken to implement the Twenty-Year Federal Acquisition Strategy described in the April 2016 report to Congress.

Additionally, there remains concern that not all purchasers of helium will be able to access their product before the presumed sale on October 1, 2021 due to the limited pipeline capacity that exists. The BLM must provide clarity to the market to ensure the purchased helium will be

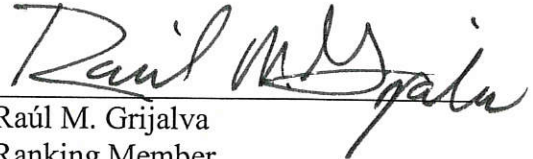
deliverable at a reasonable rate. Failure for the BLM to do so will likely lead to a negative impact on the global helium market.

The Committee respectfully requests a response on or before October 5<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate your assistance with this important issue.

Sincerely,



Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources