



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

## AMERICAN ENERGY FIRST ACT

On September 11, 2019, House Republican Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA), Ranking Republican Rob Bishop (R-UT), Republican Conference Chair Liz Cheney (R-WY), U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ), U.S. Rep. Jeff Duncan (R-SC) and U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK) will introduce legislation to overhaul federal lands energy policy. The legislation is a truly all-of-the-above approach to American energy development, encouraging the efficient onshore and offshore production of both conventional and renewable energy resources. Federal regulations have burdened energy development on federal lands and waters for far too long, and this legislation aims to put American Energy First and ensure economic growth and domestic energy security for decades to come. Locking up our domestic energy resources will only worsen our dependence on foreign sources of oil, much of which comes from our adversaries. We have the ability to achieve energy independence by safely and responsibly developing our resources here in the US, where we have the strongest environmental regulations in the world.

### ONSHORE DEVELOPMENT

For too long, cumbersome permitting delays and costly regulatory hurdles have discouraged investment development of federal lands energy resources. Despite lower royalty rates on federal lands, energy developers often choose to do business on state and private lands because of the uncertainty of the Federal regulatory process. This bill streamlines the permitting process to make federal lands more competitive and enables the States to regulate energy development activities within their borders.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- **One Size Does Not Fit All:** Today's one-size-fits-all federal regulatory framework fails to recognize the unique challenges of onshore oil and gas development in each State. This bill empowers states with approved regulatory programs to manage specific oil and gas production responsibilities on federal lands within their borders.
- **Fair Return to Energy Producing States:** States with approved regulatory programs receive the full 50 percent of their mineral revenues, eliminating the 2 percent administrative fee charged by DOI. Further, improved efficiency will help eliminate the uncertainty and expense of duplicative permitting. These revenues can be used to help support state-level public services, such as schools, infrastructure, and law enforcement.
- **Preventing Federal Overreach:** Prevents BLM from intruding on energy development on state and private lands through unnecessary permitting requirements and duplicative federal environmental reviews. Prohibits DOI from enforcing federal regulations on hydraulic fracturing on federal lands in states with corresponding rules in place.

### OFFSHORE DEVELOPMENT

The United States is uniquely positioned to safely meet rising global energy demand while reducing emissions and providing affordable, reliable energy to American households. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) estimates that up to 104 billion barrels of oil and up to 378 trillion cubic feet of gas are contained, but undiscovered, on the OCS. However, much of the OCS is off-limits for development, preventing us from meeting our energy needs at home. The offshore provisions of this legislation will expand domestic energy production on the OCS, create well-paying jobs, and increase revenues to federal and state governments to be used for our National Parks, conservation and coastal restoration.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Compensates Energy Producing States:** Fairly compensates oil and natural gas producing states in the Gulf of Mexico, and establishes equitable revenue sharing programs for the Atlantic and Alaskan planning areas.
- **Reins in Executive Overreach:** Blocks the ability of the President to create unilateral drilling bans on the OCS and requires Congressional authorization for any new withdrawals.
- **Enhances Local Conservation Efforts:** Directs revenues from offshore production to enhance our National Parks and state land and water conservation efforts, such as coastal restoration and the protection of coastal wildlife.
- **Expands Energy Production in the Gulf of Mexico:** Ensures that oil and gas production, and the associated economic benefits, won't be stymied in Eastern Gulf of Mexico.

## ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Like conventional energy resources, renewable and alternative energy sources have also languished under duplicative, confusing, and time-consuming federal regulations. This title aims to remove unnecessary regulatory hurdles to enable wind, solar, and geothermal energy production on Federal land and waters and provide for a diverse, all of the above approach to energy development in the US.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Prioritizes Onshore Geothermal, Wind and Solar Development:** Enables more efficient permitting on Federal lands most promising for renewable energy development.
- **Enables Increased Production of Geothermal Resources:** Makes exploration test sites easier to permit, allowing coproduction of geothermal energy at existing oil and gas operations, and offering noncompetitive lease sales in adjoining areas.
- **Increases Offshore Renewable Energy Development:** Increases offshore renewable development, while simultaneously generating revenues to the U.S. territories, by authorizing wind lease sales off the coasts of U.S. territories and establishing revenue sharing.

## LIMITATION on MORATORIUMS

Locking up our Federal lands and waters harms our local communities by killing jobs and reducing access to affordable, reliable energy. Any proposed moratorium on energy development should be thoughtfully evaluated through the legislative process.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- **Protects Coal Mining on Federal Lands:** Prevents bureaucratic decisions from unilaterally banning coal mining with a de facto moratorium on coal leasing.
- **Prohibits DOI from Imposing Moratoriums on New Leases:** New leases in oil, gas, or coal on Federal lands or waters will not be prohibited without Congressional approval.