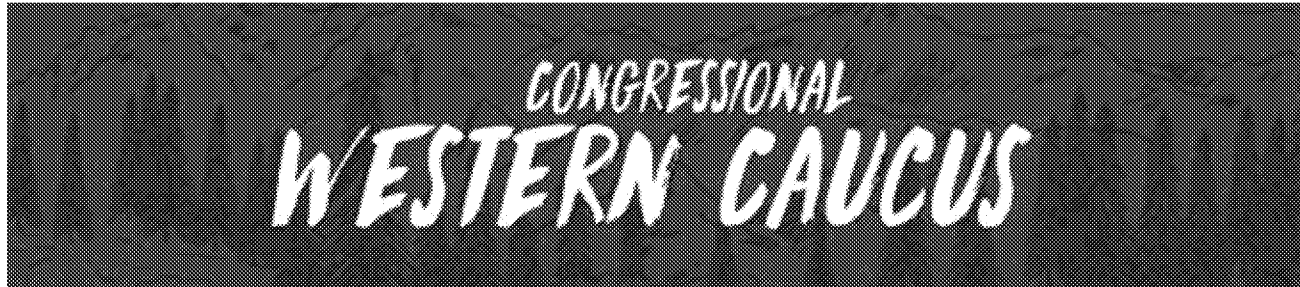


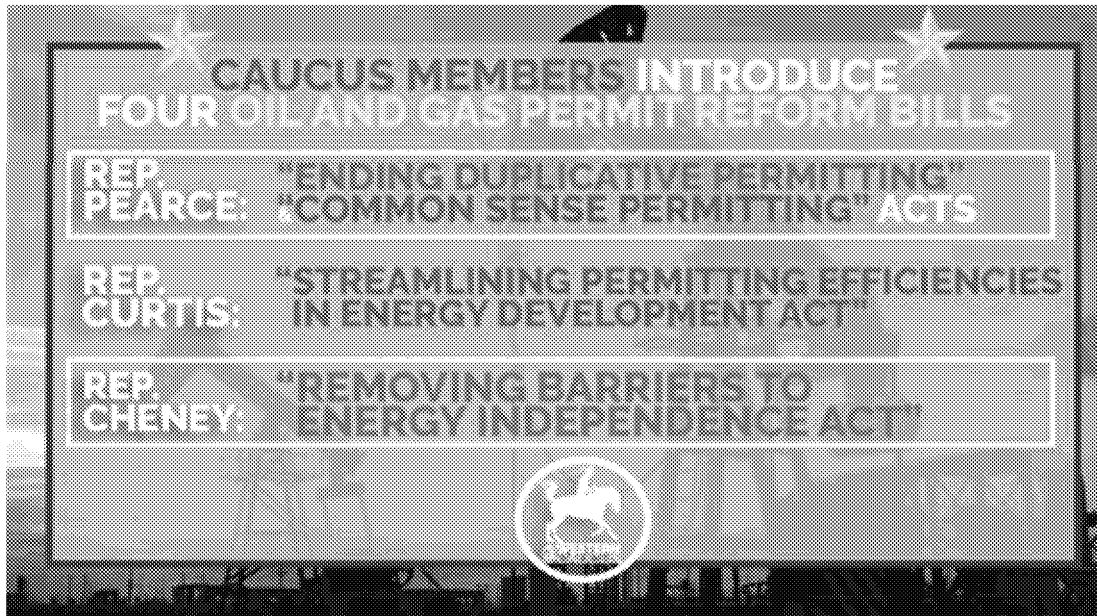
**From:** Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]  
**Sent:** 6/14/2018 9:28:04 PM  
**To:** Hanson, Tanner [Tanner.Hanson@mail.house.gov]  
**CC:** Small, Jeff [Jeff.Small@mail.house.gov]  
**Subject:** Western Caucus Members Lead Charge on Oil and Gas Permitting Reform in the House



**For Immediate Release**  
Contact: Tanner Hanson

**Date:** June 14, 2018  
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## Western Caucus Members Lead Charge on Oil and Gas Permitting Reform in the House



**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, Members of the Congressional Western Caucus including Chairman **Paul Gosar (AZ-04)**, Chairman Emeritus **Steve Pearce (NM-02)**, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman **Rob Bishop (UT-01)** and Reps. **John Curtis (UT-03)**, **Liz Cheney (WY-At Large)**, **Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)**, **Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)** and **Bill Johnson (OH-06)** released statements following the introduction of bills by Pearce, Curtis and Cheney which would institute efficiency and streamlining reforms to oil and gas permitting:

**Congressman Gosar** said "This is a dynamic slate of important legislation that each share the ultimate goal of fulfilling the President's call for renewed American energy dominance. They

remove duplicative bureaucratic mismatches, empower states to better manage their own resources and provide a handful of other commonsense, overdue reforms. Thank you to Reps. Cheney, Curtis and Pearce for your careful work on these extremely relevant legislative fixes, and I look forward to seeing these bills advance."

**Congressman Rob Bishop** stated, "Too often, the federal government gets in the way of progress. Our country is on the verge of a major energy expansion, but stubborn obstructionism poses a real threat to the jobs, prosperity and freedom this expansion would allow. I'm thankful for the leadership of the Members in the Western Caucus who spearheaded this effort. These bills cut red tape and streamline the processes that are holding us back from energy independence and greater American prosperity."

**Congressman Pearce** said, "The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) inability to timely permit energy activities is costing New Mexico thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. These two bills will ensure New Mexico can continue to play a leading role in America's energy revolution. When it takes BLM 250 days to process a permit, the State loses out on needed revenues that support over 30% of the State's budget, funding schools, police departments, road redevelopment, and community hospitals. I have greatly appreciated Chairman Gosar's willingness to discuss my ideas, and I look forward to working with the Committee to introduce these bills to ensure that New Mexico receives what it deserves."

**Congresswoman Cheney** stated, "The energy industry, the lifeblood of our economy in Wyoming, has been severely burdened by lengthy and often frivolous protests on energy projects. The Removing Barriers to Energy Independence Act will help relieve this burden by requiring a small fee in order to file a protest. My bill levels the playing field by charging a nominal fee for protests of oil and gas lease sales, applications for permit to drill, and right of way applications. The Removing Barriers to Energy Independence Act brings much needed and long overdue relief to Wyoming oil and gas operators."

**Congressman Curtis** said, "This bill will help streamline a burdensome federal process, create new economic development opportunities in rural communities across the district, and keep our country on the path of energy independence."

**Congressman LaMalfa** said, "These four bills help streamline and cut back on the bureaucratic nonsense that hinders American energy production on or near federal lands. There are far too many situations where burdensome permitting requirements unnecessarily delay drilling operations, even though they've already been determined to have minimal impact on the environment, wildlife, or historic sites. America cannot truly achieve energy independence without maximizing our resources and cutting back on misguided permitting regulations."

**Congressman Cramer** stated, "In North Dakota, our state regulators are effective and efficient at their job. The Ending Duplicative Permitting Act in particular can go a long way to not only stop the burden of duplicative permitting in the state on industry, but relieve workload for federal officials as well."

**Congressman Bill Johnson** concluded, "These common sense bills will help encourage a responsible and efficient federal permitting process for onshore energy and mineral development. I am proud to support these efforts, and hope to see them considered by the full House of Representatives in short order."

## **Background:**

This week, Reps. Steve Pearce, Liz Cheney and John Curtis introduced four bills to provide substantial reform and streamlining to various aspects of oil and gas permitting regulation and law.

Chairman Gosar led a hearing investigating all four of these bills on June 6, 2018. Hearing memos, witness testimony and video playback of the hearing can be viewed [here](#).

These bills are written to maximize necessary environmental protections for oil and gas permitting while ensuring agency, regulatory and statutory processes are as streamlined as possible.

The net effect of such reforms would be to bring our nation's overly-bureaucratized permitting processes closer in line with the President's vision for a United States that is freed from adversarial foreign influences into our energy policy and economically dominant at the global level.

## **Bill-specific descriptions:**

**Rep. Pearce's *Ending Duplicative Permitting Act*** clarifies that oil and gas drilling on non-federal land would not require an Application for Permit to Drill (APD) from the BLM if the well impacts less than 50% federal minerals. Right now, the BLM requires an APD from a producer for non-federal wells even if the well touches 1% federal mineral estate. This bill will help the BLM by reducing the significant APD backlogs in a number of BLM field offices across the country. The bill would not weaken environmental reviews in any way as these lands are already permitted and surveyed by the states. Lastly, this bill will not impact royalties paid to states. See bill text [here](#) and hearing memo [here](#).

**Rep. Curtis' H.R. 6088, the *Streamlining Permitting Efficiencies in Energy Development (SPEED) Act*** aims to streamline the process of permitting less controversial drilling operations on federal lands. The bill creates an alternative to the Application of Permit to Drill, referred to as a Notifications for Permit to Drill, that an operator can utilize if specific criteria are met. This includes certain operations within a developed field. It would also include locations where an environmental review concluded the NPD would pose no significant effects to the environment, species, or cultural/historic resources. See bill text [here](#) and hearing memo [here](#).

**Rep. Cheney's H.R. 6087, the *Removing Barriers to Energy Independence Act*** authorizes the DOI to assess an administrative fee to recover the cost of processing protests filed on oil and gas lease sales and permits. The legislation requires protestors to submit a \$150 filing fee for each protest submission under 10 pages in length and an additional \$5 for each page over 10 pages. This bill does not weaken or discourage protests, but ensures that the current protest process isn't abused by excessive or frivolous protests meant only to delay operations. See bill text [here](#) and hearing memo [here](#).

**Rep. Pearce's *Common Sense Permitting Act*** clarifies and expands existing categorical exclusions for oil and gas activity on federal lands. Section 593 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 grants categorical exclusions for oil and gas activity that occurred in areas where previous activity occurred. Unfortunately, these categorical exclusions are not always used as bureaucrats can choose when to use them or not. This bill will clarify that these categorical exclusions must be used when available while also expanding them to streamline the APD and NEPA process. This

will expedite the federal permitting process, which can take anywhere from 6 months to over a year thus allowing states with federal lands to compete with states without federal lands whose permitting process takes 1-2 weeks. Additionally, this bill will reduce flaring of natural gas on federal lands and reduce bottlenecks by expediting the approval process for much needed energy infrastructure. See bill text [here](#) and hearing memo [here](#).

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