

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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Republicans Introduce Oil Shale Legislation to Create American Jobs and American-Made Energy

Important Part of Republicans' All-of-the-Above Energy Strategy

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Doc Hastings praised Energy and Minerals Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn for introducing [The PIONEER Act](#) (*The Protecting Investment in Oil shale the Next Generation of Environment, Energy, and Resource Security Act*), H.R. 2540, to expand production of oil shale, one of our country's most viable new energy sources. Ranking Member Hastings along with Reps. Rob Bishop, Jason Chaffetz, Mike Coffman and Cynthia Lummis are original co-sponsors of the bill.

“Oil shale is an essential part of the Republican all-of-the-above energy plan, which includes renewable energy sources along with American-made oil and natural gas,” **said Ranking Member Hastings**. “The Administration’s decision to withdraw the lease sales was unnecessary and costly. However, Congress now has the opportunity to right this wrong by passing The PIONEER Act. At a time when our nation’s unemployment rate has reached an astounding 9.4%, the highest in more than 25 years, we must develop our country’s oil shale to create new American jobs, boost our economy and provide us with a domestic energy supply that will help reduce our dependence on foreign oil.”

“The uncertainty that Secretary Salazar has introduced to this issue will drive private investment dollars out of the market. Investors simply will not commit millions, or potentially billions of dollars, to the research and development needed to make oil shale a viable energy source, unless they have a clear picture of the financial rewards and challenges associated with such an investment,” **said Rep. Lamborn**. “Oil shale could result in the addition of more than one trillion barrels of recoverable oil from lands in the Western United States –this is too vital a resource to keep under lock and key. Secretary Salazar is dragging his feet with one of America’s most promising new energy sources. America needs to wean itself from foreign sources of energy once and for all.”

The PIONEER Act will:

1. Direct the Secretary of the Interior to issue additional Research, Development & Demonstration (RD&D) leases within 180 days after enactment of bids published on January 15, 2009. This would reverse Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar’s [decision last February](#) to withdraw a proposed plan for expanded oil shale RD&D

leases.

2. Make permanent the commercial oil shale regulations [published guidelines](#) by the Department last November and apply them to all commercial leasing for the management of federally owned oil shale. This will give oil and gas producers a clear set of rules for commercial development.
3. Give the Secretary of the Interior the ability to temporarily reduce royalties and fees paid by oil producers in order to further incentivize and encourage energy development.

Background

Oil shale is carbonate rock rich in an organic material called kerogen. Eventually, natural forces of pressure and temperature would convert the rock into crude oil. But rather than wait millions of years for that to happen, technology has been developed to speed up the process and take the kerogen from the rock to use as fuel.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) the U.S. holds more than half of the world's oil shale resources. The largest known deposits of oil shale are located in a 16,000-square mile area in the Green River formation in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming. The USGS's most recent estimates (April, 2009) show the region may hold more than 1.5 trillion barrels of oil – six times Saudi Arabia's proven resources, and enough to provide the United States with energy for the next 200 years.

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