



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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House Approves Legislation to Preserve Nation's Helium Supply

The Helium Stewardship Act protects jobs, economy, and taxpayers by establishing a program to prevent shortages, responsibly close the helium program

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House of Representatives today approved, by a unanimous vote of 367-0, H. Res 354, to amend the Senate's amendment to H.R. 527, the *Helium Stewardship Act*. The *Helium Stewardship Act*, as amended by the House, is a bipartisan, common sense action plan to preserve our Nation's helium supply, close the helium reserve once and for all - getting the federal government out of the helium business, and reduce the deficit by \$90 million. The bill now goes to the Senate for final approval.

This final text makes several necessary, minimal adjustments to the Senate-passed version of H.R. 527 to ensure it abides by budget rules and laws so it does not increase deficit spending. Prompt enactment of this final text will maintain the flow of helium from the Reserve after October 1st and prevent economic disruptions to American jobs, manufacturing and critical technologies, and medical devices.

"The bill before us today is truly a bipartisan, bicameral plan that I'm pleased to have worked on with both my Senate and House colleagues. Senators Ron Wyden, Lisa Murkowski, and Ed Markey - who introduced this bill with me while serving in the House, and House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Peter Defazio have all be instrumental in working towards a solution that would protect American jobs and our economy," said House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Hastings. "This bill will ensure we prevent a crippling helium shortage, bring real reforms to the federal helium program, get a better return for the taxpayer, and in the end, truly shutdown an outdated old federal program."

Specifically, H. Res 354:

- Affirms the Senate-passed policy on operation of the Helium Reserve after October 1st and the policy of ending this federal program and selling the entire Reserve.
 - The text of the Senate-passed bill's helium policy remains exactly the same with only two timing adjustments: helium is sold sooner under the same parameters as provided in the Senate bill, and the closure of Federal Helium Reserve is accomplished in a manner that saves an additional \$20 million in operating costs.
- Reduces the federal deficit by \$90 million over 10 years and fully abides by budget

rules.

- Upholds the federal government’s commitment to support rural schools and communities for the loss of revenue from federal timber harvest by providing for a one-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools program.
 - The bill maintains other non-helium policies adopted by the Senate with only variations in the years of implementation.

Background

The House [passed](#) H.R. 527, the “*Helium Stewardship Act*,” on April 26th by a vote of 394-1. The bill fulfills the urgent need to act to provide for continued operation and future sales from the Federal Helium Reserve that under current law must cease operations on October 1st. On September 19th, the Senate passed H.R. 527 with an amendment by a vote of 97-2.

The Federal Helium Reserve supplies one-third of the world’s supply of helium and a disruption would cause real harm to the Nation’s economy. Without action, tens of thousands American jobs and critical technologies, including medical devices such as MRI’s, would be at risk. Learn more at <http://naturalresources.house.gov/legislation/helium>.

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