



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

## **H.R. 6009, the Restoring American Energy Dominance Act**

*Nullifies the Bureau of Land Management's rule entitled "Fluid Mineral Leases and Leasing Process," which would significantly restrict oil and gas production on federal lands.*

### **Topline Points**

- Since day one of the Biden administration, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has attempted to stifle energy production on federal lands by any means necessary.
- Among other things, current regulations proposed by the BLM would:
  - Unnecessarily increase bonding rates for oil and gas production on federal lands
  - Introduce new "preference criteria" for onshore oil and gas leasing that would significantly limit areas available for production
  - Prevent leasing outside of currently producing areas
  - Unfairly burden small businesses

### **Background**

In late July 2023, the BLM issued a proposed rule to update its oil and gas leasing regulations. The proposed rule would make significant, non-statutory changes to the BLM's onshore oil and gas leasing program. Specifically, the rule proposes ending nationwide bonding and increasing the minimum bond amounts for individual lease bonds from \$10,000 to \$150,000 and statewide lease bonds from \$25,000 to \$500,000. The BLM attempts to justify this significant change to "limit the reclamation-related liabilities of the Federal Government." However, according to the Department of the Interior, a mere 37 orphaned oil and gas wells currently exist on BLM-managed lands, and DOI has only utilized bonds to plug wells on federal lands 40 times over the last decade.

Additionally, the proposed rule introduces the idea of using "preference criteria" to inform the BLM's selection of lands for lease sales. The BLM's rationale for this change is preserving agency resources and avoiding conflict in areas "with sensitive cultural, wildlife, and recreation resources." This methodology could significantly limit available acreage for leasing on federal lands and is unnecessary as the BLM already requires operators to mitigate impacts on these resources. Lastly, the regulation proposes to create new fees and increase existing fees while limiting flexibility for operators. Together, these impacts would significantly restrict oil and gas production on federal lands and crush small businesses.

H.R. 6009 would nullify the proposed rule and prevent the BLM from promulgating a substantially similar rule in the future.

### **Contact**

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