



The Honorable Raul Grijalva
United States House of Representatives
1511 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
United States House of Representatives
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop:

We, 23 local and tribal elected officials from across the Interior West, write to you in support of several bills that will modernize the onshore oil and gas program to ensure our communities are receiving a fair return for the resources developed on our public lands, and have an equitable seat at the table. With the current oil and gas leasing system rigged in favor of the industry, it is time for Congress to act and make sure our public lands are managed for the public.

Mineral and fossil fuel extraction, agriculture, ranching, and a thriving outdoor recreation industry are all major pillars of Western economies and take place on public lands. There is room for each of these uses on public lands, but we can't hope to sustain them all without modern, commonsense policies in place to protect the landscape, fund reclamation, ensure a fair taxpayer return, and make sure that development is done in way that includes and considers public input. Therefore, we support the following legislation to update our federal oil and gas policies:

HR 4364, Taxpayer Fairness for Resource Development Act

Taxpayers are guaranteed fair market value for the exploitation of federal lands. This bill is intended to protect that right and generate more federal revenue from oil and gas production on our public lands. The legislation would raise onshore royalty rates for the first time in a century, modernize rental and minimum bid rates, and require that these rates are periodically examined and adjusted for inflation. By modernizing the royalty rate from 12.5 percent to 18.75 percent, matching the current federal offshore royalty rate, annual revenues could increase by as much as \$38 million, according to the Government Accountability Office and the Congressional Budget Office. These revenues would come back to our communities in the form of funding for our schools and public services.

HR 4346, Bonding Reform and Taxpayer Protection Act

This bill will help ensure complete and timely cleanup of oil and gas well sites by increasing – for the first time in 60 years – the minimum bond amount the Bureau of Land Management requires for reclamation. Moreover, BLM would be required to periodically and publicly review the bond amounts and make adjustments for inflation. Communities should not be left to foot the bill when a well is left unreclaimed. These abandoned wells often leak methane that contributes

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to our climate crisis, while aging infrastructure allows contaminants to pollute our lands and waterways. Clean air and water are western values. Both are threatened by delayed or incomplete reclamation of oil and gas wells, unless lawmakers enact this bill to increase bond amounts and close the gap on reclamation costs.

HR 3225, Restoring Community Input and Public Protections in Oil and Gas Leasing Act

Oil and gas leasing on public lands has an impact on farmers, ranchers, businesses, recreationists and residents. It's only fair that each of these groups are able to participate in the management and decision-making processes surrounding oil and gas development. HR 3225 includes provisions that allot a reasonable time for public and stakeholder input, require shorter lease terms to ensure the leasing agent is working with the most current information, and ensure that other uses are considered for the land in question.

The undersigned local leaders come from states with different policies and economic landscapes, but we all place the same high value on federal lands and the revenue they generate for our communities. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 guarantees a "multiple use" rule of our public lands. That means our federal policies cannot favor oil and gas over all other industries. We need modern legislation that protects all interests and the American taxpayer – to whom our federal lands belong. Please advance each of these bills to protect our federal lands for future generations and keep them in public hands.

Sincerely,

Rachael Richards, Aspen City Councilor, Colorado
Elise Jones, Boulder County Commissioner, Colorado
Gwen Lachelt, La Plata County Commissioner, Colorado
Wally White, Former La Plata County Commissioner, Colorado
Britt Bassett, La Plata Electric Association Board Director, Colorado
Polly Christensen, Longmont City Councilor, Colorado
Hilary Cooper, San Miguel County Commissioner, Colorado
Lance Waring, San Miguel County Commissioner, Colorado
Rosalyn Fry, Aztec City Commissioner, New Mexico
Mark Lewis, Aztec City Commissioner, New Mexico
Victor Snover, Mayor, City of Aztec, New Mexico
Harry Browne, Grant County Commissioner, New Mexico
Alicia Edwards, Grant County Commissioner, New Mexico
Gill Sorg, Las Cruces City Councilor, New Mexico
Gabe Vasquez, Las Cruces City Councilor, New Mexico
Anna Hansen, Santa Fe County Commissioner, New Mexico
Duane Chili Yazzie, Navajo Nation Shiprock Chapter President, New Mexico
Nathaniel Evans, Taos Town Councilor, New Mexico
Kalen Jones, Moab City Councilor, Utah
Glenn Wright, Summit County Councilor, Utah
Pete Gosar, Albany County Commissioner, Wyoming
Joyce Evans, Mayor, Town of Fort Laramie, Wyoming
Greg Epstein, Teton County Commissioner, Wyoming