FERVO
ENERGY

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0404

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
2330 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0502

July 18, 2025

RE: Fervo Energy Supports the House Natural Resource Committee's Focus on Permitting Reform to Accelerate Next-Generation Geothermal Deployment.

Dear Chair Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman:

On behalf of Fervo Energy, America's leading developers of next-generation geothermal power, we write to express our support for Congress's work to accelerate permitting for energy projects in the United States.

Fervo's mission is to deliver reliable, around-the-clock baseload power from geothermal heat. We are doing so by applying technologies that were originally developed for the shale revolution, including hydraulic fracturing, horizontal drilling, computational reservoir modeling, and distributed fiber optic sensing, to unlock previously inaccessible geothermal resources. The next-generation geothermal industry has a major role to play in providing affordable, abundant, and reliable power to Americans and its projects are effective, predictable, and scalable.

American Geothermal and Energy Dominance

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) released its report, GeoVision: Harnessing the Heat Beneath Our Feet, which estimated that geothermal could provide over 120 GW of electricity by 2050. For context, the entire grid currently produces 1,250 GW today, per the EIA[1]. The GeoVision estimate predated many of Fervo's recent technological advances that expand geothermal's resource potential and make it viable in new geologies across the U.S.

Expanding the geothermal industry is foundational to the economic flourishing of rural America. Not only will these projects create hundreds of thousands of good-paying and long-term energy jobs, but through providing reliable and affordable clean baseload power, geothermal can form the backbone of economic development in AI and advanced manufacturing. Based on the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's

[1] U.S. Energy Information Administration, Electricity Generation, Capacity, and Sales in the United States

job creation model, each new geothermal plant creates tens of thousands of construction and operational jobs, many of them requiring workers with drilling expertise and oil and gas backgrounds.

Streamlining federal permitting can help unleash the potential of American geothermal, a baseload energy source that will support American energy dominance, reduce energy costs and support U.S. leadership in artificial intelligence and other critical national industries.

Commonsense Steps for Permitting and Geothermal

Accelerating geothermal development requires taking steps to simplify and expedite the permitting of energy projects on federal lands. While over 90% of American geothermal resources exist underneath federally managed land, the federal permitting process presents one of the largest barriers to building new geothermal energy.

The process of executing the environmental analyses and seeking multiple approvals required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) to develop geothermal on public lands can take up to ten years (or more) and is lengthier and more prone to delay for geothermal than for other renewables or for oil and gas industry projects. Duplicative analysis and approvals in the current federal permitting process create significant bottlenecks to geothermal development, lengthen timelines for suitable projects, limit access to private financing, and slow technological progress.

The 119th Congress has already taken several Important and bipartisan steps to advance common-sense reforms to accelerate the permitting of energy projects and reduce red tape. Fervo looks forward to working with the 119th Congress to support the passage of this legislation. This includes:

- Committing Leases for Energy Access Now (CLEAN) Act (H.R. 1687), introduced by Representatives Fulcher, Maloy, Boebert, and Lee. This legislation would increase the frequency of geothermal lease sales from every two years to every year, increasing industry access to commercial resources and increasing the speed of innovation and development.
- The Geothermal Energy Opportunity (GEO) Act (H.R. 301), introduced by Representatives Maloy and Lee. This legislation would provide timeline certainty for project developers by setting a 60-day timeline for DOI to review otherwise completed geothermal leasing and permitting applications.
- Streamlining Thermal Energy through Advanced Mechanisms (STEAM) Act (H.R. 1077), introduced by Representatives Maloy, Fitzpatrick, Lee, and Gluesenkamp Perez, along with its Senate companion (S. 456), introduced by Senators Murkowski, Daines, Hoeven and Cortez Masto. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 established categorical exclusions for certain exploratory activities in oil and gas development and this bill would expand the same categorical exclusions to geothermal development, providing equal treatment of geothermal for substantially similar activities.
- The Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act (H.R. 398), introduced by Representative Ocasio-Cortez. This legislation would provide DOI with resources, funded by permit applicants, to expedite leasing and permitting approvals without increasing federal budgetary pressure.

Fervo also supports measures considered in the 118th Congress, including:

- The Geothermal Energy Optimization (GEO) Act (S. 3945), introduced by Senators Lee, Risch, Heinrich and Cortez Masto. This bill directs the Departments of Interior (DOI) and

Agriculture (USDA) to adopt new categorical exclusions for geothermal exploration and testing, expands the categorical exclusion for oil and gas exploration under Section 390 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to include geothermal, increases the frequency of geothermal lease sales, establishes a Geothermal Ombudsman within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and creates a Geothermal Strike Team within BLM to provide technical assistance to permitting and leasing applications. S. 3945 is perhaps the most comprehensive geothermal permitting bill introduced to date, reflecting a number of provisions that have been introduced and advanced on a bipartisan basis as standalone bills.

- The Energy Permitting Reform Act (S. 4753), introduced by Senators Barrasso and Manchin, specifically Section 208 on geothermal. Drawing on the GEO Act, the Energy Permitting Reform Act included provisions for Categorical Exclusions under DOI and USDA, more frequent geothermal lease sales, agency deadlines for geothermal permit applications, and the Geothermal Ombudsman described above. It also would have provided DOI with resources to expedite leasing and application reviews and required DOI to set a process for simultaneous consideration of multiple phases of a geothermal project from subsurface exploration to power plant construction.
- The Harnessing Energy at Thermal Sources (HEATS) Act (H.R. 7409), introduced by Representative Young Kim. This legislation clarifies the permitting regime for split-estate resources, where there are wells located on non-federal land, accessing resources with a minority federal ownership.

Common-sense permitting reform would take an important step in avoiding unnecessary reviews and enabling faster deployment of next-generation geothermal resources. We urge the Committee to continue progressing toward these important reforms.

Fervo Energy appreciates the Committee's steadfast leadership on this topic and looks forward to continuing our work to accelerate American geothermal development and energy dominance.

Sincerely,

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