



GEOTHERMAL RISING ACTION

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 21, 2025

RE: Geothermal Rising Supports the Committee's Efforts to Reform the Permitting Process for Responsible and Streamlined Geothermal Energy Development

Geothermal Rising—the national trade association for the American geothermal industry, representing over 100 organizational members—writes in support of the Committee's focus on permitting reform—specifically for geothermal energy. We emphasize the urgent need for a pragmatic and streamlined regulatory framework to unlock the full potential of this clean, secure, abundant, American resource.

Geothermal energy provides reliable, baseload, high capacity (90%+), low-cost power. Most geothermal systems are manufactured domestically and do not rely on vulnerable foreign supply chains for rare earths and other materials. Next-generation geothermal technologies are expanding the opportunities for geothermal nationwide beyond traditional geographical constraints.

However, a barrier to accelerating geothermal development today is a slow, inefficient, and outdated permitting process on federal lands. Current regulations often subject small-scale, low-impact geothermal exploration projects to lengthy, duplicative, costly, and often redundant environmental reviews—creating years of delay, uncertainty, and financing challenges. Geothermal projects can face timelines of up to a decade, with multiple, sequential environmental reviews for a single project.

Geothermal Rising believes that smart, targeted permitting reform is essential; however, we maintain that environmental due diligence must remain at the forefront, within reason. Equally critical is the protection of Tribal sovereignty and self-determination through any permitting process, especially where projects may impact Tribal lands, cultural resources, or ancestral territories. We simply support that the permitting process become more efficient, consistent, balanced, and effective such as by:

- Ensuring the geothermal industry has access to the same Categorical Exclusions (CXs) enjoyed by other industries, and other CXs specific to geothermal energy development, within reason, especially for early stage exploration and resource confirmation activities.
- Allowing for the simultaneous review of different project phases, eliminating years of unnecessary sequential delays.
- Setting clear decision-making deadlines and modern, transparent systems to provide project developers with the certainty they need.
- Ensuring the BLM has the funding, staffing, and specialized expertise needed to process applications efficiently.
- Embedding mechanisms for early, robust, and well-resourced Tribal consultation and engagement where appropriate, to ensure affected Tribal Nations are meaningfully included in the decision-making process.

We encourage the Committee to prioritize geothermal deployment through pragmatic, responsible permitting reforms that reflect the urgency of this moment. Success will require honoring Tribal sovereignty, engaging local voices, and ensuring shared benefits across communities. *Geothermal Rising* stands ready to support your efforts and offer continued input as legislation develops.

Sincerely,

Bryant Jones, Ph.D.
Executive Director