

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2024

Mr. Benjamin E. Gruber
Deputy Assistant Director, Energy, Mineral, and Realty
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

Dear Mr. Gruber,

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources at a legislative hearing on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, on the following bills:

- **H.R. 6482 (Rep. Fulcher)**, “*Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act*”;
- **H.R. 7370 (Rep. Curtis)**, “*Geothermal Energy Opportunity Act*” or the “*GEO Act*”;
- **H.R. 7375 (Rep. Hageman)**, To amend the Mineral Leasing Act to improve the assessment of expression of interest fees, and for other purposes;
- **H.R. 7377 (Rep. Hunt)**, “*Royalty Resiliency Act*”;
- **H.R. 7409 (Rep. Kim of CA)**, “*Harnessing Energy At Thermal Sources Act*” or the “*HEATS Act*”; and
- **H.R. 7422 (Rep. Ocasio-Cortez)**, “*Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act of 2024*”.

Your testimony on all the bills was extremely helpful in defining the Subcommittee’s understanding of the issue and I appreciate the effort you took to prepare and present your testimony. While many questions were asked during the hearing, the Subcommittee has additional questions, attached, for your reply.

Please forward your responses to Lonnie Smith, Clerk of the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, at Lonnie.smith@mail.house.gov by March 25, 2024. Your assistance in meeting this deadline is requested, as failure to meet it will be noted in the printed transcript.

Once again, thank you for your extensive effort in making this a valuable hearing.

Sincerely,



Pete Stauber
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
Chairman

Enclosure

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Questions from Rep. Westerman for [Benjamin Gruber, Deputy Assistant Director,
Energy, Minerals, and Realty, Bureau of Land Management]

1. Following up on my question regarding geothermal lease sales, I would like to request that the Department provide all pending nominations in each state along with the corresponding acreage and when they were submitted.
2. To date, the Biden administration has held 19 onshore oil and gas lease sales totaling roughly 245 thousand acres. At this point in the Trump administration the Department had held 84 lease sales totaling roughly 3.8 million acres.
 - a. Please provide the amount of production and royalties generated on the 245,000 acres leased by this administration as well as the amount of production and royalties on the 3.8 million acres leased by the last administration.

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Question from Rep. Susie Lee for Mr. Benjamin E. Gruber, Deputy Assistant Director, Energy, Minerals, & Realty Management, Bureau of Land Management:

1. Mr. Gruber, in a statement for the record dated December 12, 2023 and submitted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to this subcommittee, BLM indicated that it “is working on administratively establishing CXs [categorical exclusions] specifically for geothermal development.” Could you please provide an update on the status of those CXs, inclusive of an estimated timeline for completion, and further detail how BLM expects that each will benefit geothermal permitting?

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Questions from Rep. Fulcher for Mr. Gruber, Deputy Assistant Director, Energy, Minerals, and Realty, BLM

1. Mr. Gruber, in your written testimony, you said that BLM is working to develop categorical exclusions to streamline the review of some geothermal exploration projects. Could you expand on the latest actions by BLM on that development?