

Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 7422, With an Amendment

(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)

118TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 7422

To amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to provide cost-recovery authority for the Department of the Interior.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to provide cost-recovery authority for the Department of the Interior.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Geothermal Cost-Re-
5 covery Authority Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. COST RECOVERY FROM GEOTHERMAL LEASING,**
2 **PERMITTING, AND INSPECTIONS.**

3 Section 6 of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30
4 U.S.C. 1005) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
5 lowing:

6 “(j) COST RECOVERY.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—During the period that be-
8 gins on the date of enactment of this subsection and
9 ends September 30, 2031, the Secretary may require
10 an applicant for, or a holder of, a geothermal lease
11 to reimburse the United States for all reasonable ad-
12 ministrative and other costs incurred by the United
13 States from—

14 “(A) processing the application for the
15 geothermal lease, including any application for
16 an operations plan, geothermal drilling permit,
17 utilization plan, site license, facility construc-
18 tion permit, commercial use permit, and any
19 other approval associated with a geothermal
20 lease; and

21 “(B) inspecting and monitoring—

22 “(i) geophysical exploration activities;

23 “(ii) the drilling, plugging, and aban-
24 donment of wells; and

25 “(iii) the construction, operation, ter-
26 mination, and reclamation of any well site

1 or facility for the utilization of geothermal
2 resources pursuant to the geothermal
3 lease.

4 “(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining wheth-
5 er to require reimbursement under paragraph (1),
6 the Secretary shall consider whether there is in ex-
7 istence a cooperative cost share agreement between
8 the United States and the holder of a geothermal
9 lease.

10 “(3) ADJUSTMENTS.—The Secretary may re-
11 duce the amount to be reimbursed under paragraph
12 (1) if the Secretary determines—

13 “(A) that full reimbursement would impose
14 an economic hardship on the applicant; or

15 “(B) that a less than full reimbursement is
16 necessary to promote the greatest use of geo-
17 thermal resources.

18 “(4) USE.—The amounts reimbursed under this
19 subsection shall be credited to the currently applica-
20 ble appropriation, account, or fund of the Depart-
21 ment of the Interior as discretionary offsetting col-
22 lections, and shall be available only to the extent
23 provided in advance in appropriations Acts for—

24 “(A) processing the application for geo-
25 thermal leases, including any application for op-

1 erations plans, geothermal drilling permits, uti-
2 lization plans, site licenses, facility construction
3 permits, commercial use permits, and any other
4 approval associated with geothermal leases; and

5 “(B) inspecting and monitoring—

6 “(i) geophysical exploration activities;

7 “(ii) the drilling, plugging, and aban-
8 donment of wells; and

9 “(iii) the construction, operation, ter-
10 mination, and reclamation of any well site
11 or facility for the utilization of geothermal
12 resources pursuant to geothermal leases.”.

13 **SEC. 3. REPORT.**

14 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 5 years after the date
15 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior,
16 in consultation with the geothermal industry and other
17 stakeholders, shall submit to the Committee on Natural
18 Resources of the House of Representatives and the Com-
19 mittee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate,
20 and make publicly available on the website of the Depart-
21 ment of the Interior, a report that includes—

22 (1) an assessment of how the amendments
23 made by section 2 of this Act affected the Bureau
24 of Land Management’s geothermal program;

1 (2) any recommendations for reauthorization of
2 section 6(j) of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970,
3 as added by this Act; and

4 (3) any other recommendations for updates to
5 such section and the Bureau of Land Management's
6 geothermal program.

7 (b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing the report re-
8 quired in subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior shall
9 solicit facts or information from the geothermal industry
10 and other stakeholders.