



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

**To:** House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members  
**From:** Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Staff,  
Rob MacGregor – ([Robert.MacGregor@mail.house.gov](mailto:Robert.MacGregor@mail.house.gov)),  
Will King – ([Will.King@mail.house.gov](mailto:Will.King@mail.house.gov)), and  
Lonnie Smith – ([Lonnie.Smith@mail.house.gov](mailto:Lonnie.Smith@mail.house.gov)) x5-9297  
**Date:** Monday, May 19, 2025  
**Subject:** Legislative Hearing on 6 bills

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The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources will hold a legislative hearing on H.R. 513 (Rep. Higgins), “*Offshore Lands Authorities Act of 2025*”; H.R. 931 (Rep. Downing), To allow certain Federal minerals to be mined consistent with the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification, and for other purposes; H.R. 2250 (Rep. DelBene), “*National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act of 2025*”; H.R. 2556 (Rep. Hunt) “*Comprehensive Offshore Resource Enhancement Act of 2025*” or the “*CORE Act of 2025*”; H.R. 3168 (Rep. Valadao), “*National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2025*”; and H.R. 3176 (Rep. Begich), To amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System, on **Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. in 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Jacob Greenberg ([Jacob.Greenberg@mail.house.gov](mailto:Jacob.Greenberg@mail.house.gov)) by 4:30 p.m. on May 19, 2025, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

## **I. KEY MESSAGES**

- H.R. 513 will nullify previous offshore energy withdrawals and limit the duration and size of future offshore energy withdrawals to bolster U.S. energy dominance, increase GDP, reduce trade deficits, and help balance the federal budget.
- The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management’s (BOEM) resource assessment process is outdated and susceptible to political interference. H.R. 2556 will modernize these assessments and ensure more accurate data collection for offshore oil and gas production, enhancing U.S. energy security and economic stability and reducing reliance on imports.
- The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) under the Biden administration purposefully delayed the permitting process for the Bull Mountains Mine in Montana for over two years. H.R. 931 will right this wrong and allow for responsible coal production in Montana, reducing energy costs for American families and providing much-needed revenue to states and the federal government.

- Natural Hazards such as landslides, earthquakes, and volcanoes cost the government upwards of \$20 billion per year.<sup>1</sup> H.R. 2250, H.R. 3168, and H.R. 3176 reauthorize the National Landslide Hazards Reduction Program, the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, and the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System, which aim to reduce the cost incurred by the government and save lives by providing early warnings to communities.

## II. WITNESSES

### **Panel I (Members of Congress):**

- To Be Announced

### **Panel II (Administration):**

- **Dr. Walter Cruickshank**, Deputy Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC [*H.R. 513 & H.R. 2556*]

### **Panel III:**

- **Mr. Cory Kief**, Director of Business Development, Crosby Tugs, LLC, Galliano, LA [*H.R. 513 & H.R. 2556*]
- **Mr. Parker Phipps**, CEO, Signal Peak Energy, Roundup, MT [*H.R. 931*]
- **Dr. Mike West**, Director and State Seismologist, Alaska Earthquake Center, Fairbanks, AK [*H.R. 2250, H.R. 3168, H.R. 3176*]
- **Mr. Doug Helton**, former Regional Operations Supervisor, Emergency Response Division, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Seattle, WA [*H.R. 513 & H.R. 2556*] (*Minority Witness*)

## III. BACKGROUND

### **H.R. 513 (Rep. Higgins), “Offshore Lands Authorities Act of 2025”**

The Offshore Lands Authorities Act of 2025 seeks to nullify specific Presidential withdrawals of offshore lands made under Section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA).<sup>2</sup> The bill would also amend OCSLA to limit future Presidential withdrawals. By restoring access to these lands for oil and gas leasing, the bill aims to enhance energy security, support economic growth, and ensure Congressional oversight of offshore resource management.

On January 6, 2025, in the waning days of the last administration, President Biden recklessly issued a Presidential Memoranda withdrawing approximately 625 million acres of Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) lands in the Gulf of America and the Atlantic, Pacific, and Alaska

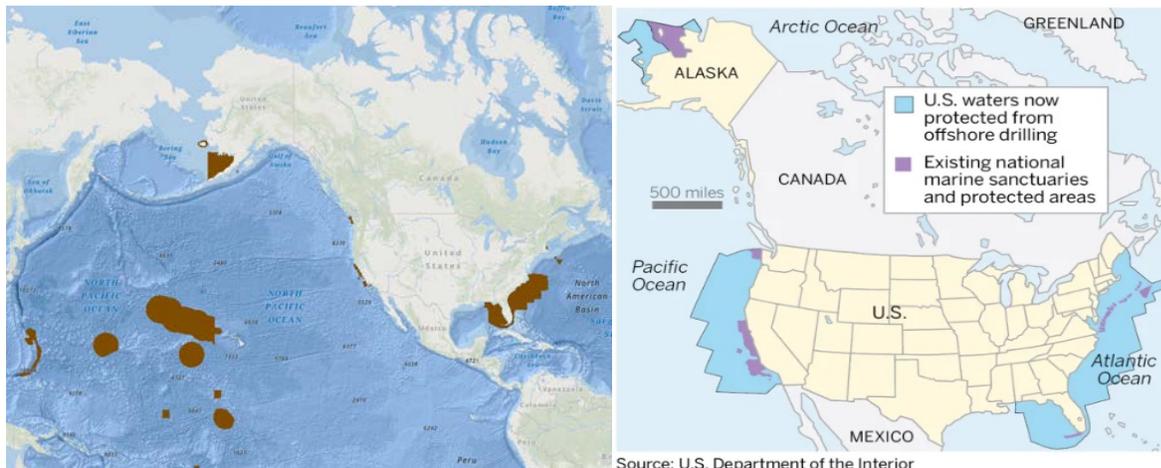
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<sup>1</sup> USGS, USGS-FEMA study highlights economic earthquake risk in the United States, <https://www.usgs.gov/news/national-news-release/new-usgs-fema-study-highlights-economic-earthquake-risk-united-states>

<sup>2</sup> 43 U.S.C. 1341(a).

planning areas from oil and gas leasing, citing environmental and climate concerns.<sup>3</sup> On January 20, 2025, President Trump revoked these withdrawals, restoring leasing eligibility.<sup>4</sup>

H.R. 513, introduced by Rep. Higgins on January 16, 2025, not only nullifies the most egregious existing OCS withdrawals but also limits future withdrawals to 150,000 acres per action, 500,000 acres cumulatively without Congressional approval, and ensures that each withdrawal only lasts 20 years in duration. The bill also mandates geological, economic, and security assessments before promulgating a withdrawal, requires withdrawals to be submitted for Congressional review with an expedited disapproval process, and ensures alignment with approved Five-Year Oil and Gas Leasing Programs, enhancing energy security and oversight.



Withdrawn Areas as of 2020 (left) and Areas unavailable for leasing as of January, 2025 (right). Source: U.S. Department of the Interior

### **H.R. 931 (Rep. Downing), To allow certain Federal minerals to be mined consistent with the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification.**

Signal Peak Energy (SPE) currently operates the only underground coal mine in Montana: the Bull Mountain Mine.<sup>5</sup> Despite reserves that can last over 50 years,<sup>6</sup> the mine will soon run out of recoverable reserves as SPE cannot access federal coal tracts that run in a checkerboard pattern across the area.<sup>7</sup> SPE has been seeking OSMRE's approval to mine 1,835 acres of federal coal since 2013. OSMRE previously approved a mining plan modification along with an environmental assessment in 2015 and 2018 that would allow access to this acreage but both efforts were vacated by the U.S. District Court for the District of Montana in 2017<sup>8</sup> and 2023,

<sup>3</sup> The White House, Presidential Actions, Memorandum on the Withdrawal of Certain Areas of the United States Outer Continental Shelf from Oil or Natural Gas Leasing, <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2025/01/06/memorandum-on-the-withdrawal-of-certain-areas-of-the-united-states-outer-continental-shelf-from-oil-or-natural-gas-leasing-2/>

<sup>4</sup> The White House, Presidential Actions, INITIAL RESCISSIONS OF HARMFUL EXECUTIVE ORDERS AND ACTIONS, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/initial-rescissions-of-harmful-executive-orders-and-actions/>

<sup>5</sup> Signal Peak Energy, *Reimagining Underground Coal Mining*, (last visited Nov. 13, 2024), <https://www.signalpeakenergy.com/about#:~:text=Signal%20Peak%20Energy%2C%20LLC%20is,and%20cutting%20Dedge%20production%20methods.>

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Darrell Ehrlick, *Signal Peak sues Department of the Interior for stalling on coal lease, says mine may have to close*, Daily Montanan (Apr. 25, 2024), <https://dailymontanan.com/2024/04/25/signal-peak-sues-blm-for-stalling-on-coal-lease-says-mine-may-have-to-close/>.

<sup>8</sup> Mont. Env'tl. Info. Ctr. v. U.S. Off of Surface Mining, 274 F. Supp. 3d 1074, 1105 (D. Mont. 2017), [https://climatecasechart.com/wp-content/uploads/case-documents/2017/20170814\\_docket-915-cv-00106\\_order-1.pdf](https://climatecasechart.com/wp-content/uploads/case-documents/2017/20170814_docket-915-cv-00106_order-1.pdf).

respectively.<sup>9</sup> Specifically in the 2023 decision, Judge Donald W. Molloy vacated the mine modification and remanded the matter to the Department of the Interior to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS).<sup>10</sup> Despite receiving this decision in February of 2023, OSMRE waited six months before issuing a notice of intent to prepare the required EIS.<sup>11</sup> In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act deadlines, OSMRE is required to complete the EIS two years after the date the agency determines that an EIS is necessary,<sup>12</sup> which in this case was February 2025. Not shockingly, the OSMRE under the Biden administration dragged its feet and missed this deadline.

H.R. 931 would remedy this issue by requiring the Secretary of the Interior to approve the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification, allowing the mine and its 300 workers to continue operations.<sup>13</sup> Under the bill, all Federal coal reserves leased under Federal Coal Lease MTM 97988 would be permitted to be mined by the Secretary of the Interior. This bill is supported by the entire Montana delegation in the House and the Senate and mirrors a companion bill introduced by Senator Daines, S. 362. This mine plays a crucial role in the economy of Musselshell County by generating over \$90 million annually in state, local, and federal taxes.<sup>14</sup> At a time when we need more energy, not less, this mine and its vast reserves must be authorized to continue operations.

### **H.R. 2250 (Rep. DelBene), “National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act of 2025”**

Landslides are a major geologic hazard in every state, causing between \$1 and \$ 2 billion in damages and more than 25 casualties annually.<sup>15</sup> The United States Geological Survey (USGS) established the Landslide Hazards Program (LHP) in the 1970s to research the Earth's geologic structure and draw scientific conclusions about landslides and ground failures.<sup>16</sup> The states utilize this research to prepare for and properly respond to these disasters.

The National Landslides Preparedness Act (NLPA) was passed in the House of Representatives in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress and was signed into law on January 5, 2021.<sup>17</sup> The NLPA established the National Landslide Hazards Reduction Program (NLHRP) and the 3D Elevation Program (3DEP), authorizing both programs from 2021 to 2024. The programs allow USGS to gather data to enable states and communities to reduce loss in the event of a landslide. The Director of the USGS leads implementation of the NLHRP and coordinates with states, territories, and Indian

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<sup>9</sup> 350 Mont. v. Haaland, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 23219 (D. Mont. Feb. 10, 2023), [https://climatecasechart.com/wp-content/uploads/case-documents/2023/20230210\\_docket-919-cv-00012\\_order.pdf](https://climatecasechart.com/wp-content/uploads/case-documents/2023/20230210_docket-919-cv-00012_order.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Department of the Interior, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Signal Peak Energy, LLC's Federal Mine Plan for Federal Lease MTM-97988; Bull Mountains Mine Amendment 3 and 5 EIS, 8/07/23, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/08/07/2023-16846/notice-of-intent-to-prepare-an-environmental-impact-statement-for-signal-peak-energy-llcs-federal>.

<sup>12</sup> 42 U.S.C. 4336a(g)(1)(A)(i).

<sup>13</sup> Darrell Ehrlick, *Signal Peak sues Department of the Interior for stalling on coal lease, says mine may have to close*, Daily Montanan (Apr. 25, 2024), <https://dailymontan.com/2024/04/25/signal-peak-sues-blm-for-stalling-on-coal-lease-says-mine-may-have-to-close/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*

<sup>15</sup> USGS. What We Do – Landslide Hazards Program. [https://www.usgs.gov/programs/landslide-hazards/what-we-do-landslide-hazards-program#:~:text=On%20January%205%2C%202021%20the%20National%20Landslide%20Preparedness%20Act%20\(P.L.](https://www.usgs.gov/programs/landslide-hazards/what-we-do-landslide-hazards-program#:~:text=On%20January%205%2C%202021%20the%20National%20Landslide%20Preparedness%20Act%20(P.L.)

<sup>16</sup> *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> CRS. Enactment of the National Landslide Preparedness Act, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11008>

tribes to coordinate data collection and share information.<sup>18</sup> The NLPA also charges the USGS with mapping and researching landslide hazards, responding to landslides, and coordinating with state, local, territorial, and tribal entities to reduce landslide risks.<sup>19</sup> The goal of 3DEP is to establish high-quality topographic elevation data of the entire U.S., enabling better understanding of landslides and why they occur.<sup>20</sup> USGS uses Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) technology when mapping the Earth.<sup>21</sup> By the end of fiscal year (FY) 2022, the USGS had elevation data gathered via LIDAR for 90 percent of the U.S.<sup>22</sup> 3DEP allows the USGS to gather new topography data and study how landslides shift the landscape from one year to the next. This allows USGS and the states to develop plans and procedures in the event of a landslide to minimize losses

Landslides have affected numerous communities across the U.S. In 2018, Alaska experienced a devastating series of 43 landslides after a 7.1-magnitude earthquake hit just north of Anchorage.<sup>23</sup> This disaster caused \$76 million in damage, but fortunately, there were no fatalities.<sup>24</sup> Heavy rainfall is the most common cause of landslides, particularly rainfall on burned, steeply sloped terrain (e.g., a post-wildfire debris flow).<sup>25</sup> H.R. 2250 reauthorizes NLHRP at \$35 million, which represents an increased authorization of \$10 million per year until FY 2030, over the current \$25 million levels. It also authorizes 3DEP through FY 2030 at the current authorization of appropriations level of \$40 million per year.<sup>26</sup>

### **H.R. 2556 (Rep. Hunt), “Comprehensive Offshore Resource Enhancement Act of 2025” or the “CORE Act of 2025”**

The OCS is critical in the United States' energy strategy, providing substantial oil and natural gas resources that contribute to national energy security, economic stability, and coastal resiliency goals. BOEM periodically conducts resource assessments of the OCS and regularly prepares 5-year leasing plans as mandated by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPA05)<sup>27</sup> and OCSLA.<sup>28</sup> These assessments, which include Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Resources (UTRR) and Undiscovered Economically Recoverable Resources (UERR), are crucial for informed decision-making and contribute to 5-year program planning and development.<sup>29</sup> UTRR and UERR are critical components of BOEM's comprehensive inventory and analysis of oil and natural gas resources in the OCS. Undiscovered oil and gas resources in the OCS have the potential to significantly boost the U.S. economy while maintaining the U.S. edge in producing cleaner hydrocarbons than the rest of the world. For example, energy production occurring in the

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<sup>18</sup> *Id.*

<sup>19</sup> Public Law 116–323

<sup>20</sup> USGS. 3D Elevation Program. <https://www.usgs.gov/3d-elevation-program>

<sup>21</sup> USGS. What is Lidar, <https://www.usgs.gov/news/science-snippet/earthword-lidar>

<sup>22</sup> USGS. What is 3DEP, <https://www.usgs.gov/3d-elevation-program/what-3dep>

<sup>23</sup> USGS. 2018 Anchorage, Alaska earthquake. <https://www.usgs.gov/data/initial-observations-landslides-triggered-2018-anchorage-alaska-earthquake>

<sup>24</sup> Alaska Earthquake Center, 2018 year in review. <https://earthquake.alaska.edu/2018-year-review#:~:text=November%2030%20Anchorage%20M7.1&text=Miraculously%2C%20there%20were%20no%20deaths,earthquake%20in%20Alaska%20since%201964>.

<sup>25</sup> CRS Reports. Landslides: Federal Role in Research, Assessment, and Response. <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/R47588>

<sup>26</sup> 43 U.S.C. § 3104 section (e)

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Congress. (2005). Energy Policy Act of 2005, as amended. Pub.L. 109–58.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Congress. (1953). Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, as amended. Pub.L. 83–212.

<sup>29</sup> BOEM. (2021). 2021 Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Resources (UTRR) by Play. Retrieved July, 2024, from <https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/oil-gas-energy/resource-evaluation/2021%20UTRR%20by%20Play.pdf>

Gulf of America is 46% less carbon-intensive when displacing global production in countries like Russia, China, and Iran.<sup>30</sup>

Bilateral maritime boundary treaties, such as the 1990 US-Soviet Union (now Russia) Maritime Boundary Agreement and the 2000 US-Mexico Maritime Boundary Agreement, include provisions on sovereign rights over natural resources.<sup>31</sup> These agreements ensure that neither country can claim resources in the other's territory. The 2000 US-Mexico Agreement also addresses transboundary hydrocarbon reservoirs, establishing a framework for equitable and efficient development of such resources.<sup>32</sup> Looking to the north, ongoing disputes with Canada over jurisdictional rights to OCS areas, particularly in the Beaufort Sea, Gulf of Alaska, and Gulf of Maine, underscore the critical need to first delineate maritime boundaries to establish ownership before even considering potential transboundary resource development.<sup>33 34</sup>

The CORE Act addresses the critical need for enhanced assessment of transboundary hydrocarbon reservoirs by requiring BOEM to leverage existing seismic data to resolve boundary disputes, examine unresolved boundaries for decision-maker clarity, and assess joint production feasibility. It also forces BOEM to assess activity by Cuba, Mexico, Canada, the Bahamas, and Russia to ensure compliance with transboundary agreements to determine whether U.S. revenue is protected from exploitation of cross-border reservoirs with our neighbors.

BOEM's current resource assessment process faces challenges in data acquisition, technological integration, and environmental impact considerations. Additionally, the two most recent analyses by BOEM skewed greatly in their findings. In 2016, BOEM reported UTRR totaled 91 billion barrels of oil (BBO), 328 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of gas, and 149 billion barrels of oil equivalent (BOE).<sup>35</sup> By 2021, these figures had dropped to 68 BBO, 229 TCF of gas, and 109 BOE.<sup>36</sup> The resulting decrease was not due to production, discoveries, seepage, or any rational cause. The CORE Act would amend EAct05 to ensure that resource assessments include the latest data and methodologies for accurate and reliable estimates and would specifically detail what BOEM should consider in each assessment.

By improving BOEM's data acquisition methods, this bill will prompt an increase in domestic oil production, which will bring greater energy security, more affordable energy prices, a lower national trade deficit, and increased revenue passed to states for vital coastal restoration and infrastructure projects. Additionally, the bill would mandate an economic analysis to assess the potential for job creation from OCS development across exploration, production, refining, and

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<sup>30</sup> National Ocean Industries Association. "GHG Emission Intensity of Crude Oil and Condensate Production." May 2023.

<https://www.noia.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/NOIA-Study-GHG-Emission-Intensity-of-Crude-Oil-and-Condensate-Production.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of State. "Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Maritime Boundary." June 1, 1990. [https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/US\\_Russia\\_1990.pdf#page=5](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/US_Russia_1990.pdf#page=5)

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of State. "Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Mexican States on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf in the Western Gulf of Mexico Beyond 200 Nautical Miles." June 9, 2000.

[https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/US\\_Mexico\\_2000\\_withExtension.pdf#page=4](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/US_Mexico_2000_withExtension.pdf#page=4)

<sup>33</sup> "Canada Protests U.S. Move on Oil Leases in Disputed Waters," The New York Times, May 20, 1984,

<https://www.nytimes.com/1984/05/20/world/canada-protests-us-move-on-oil-leases-in-disputed-waters.html>

<sup>34</sup> "U.S., Canada Do Battle Over Beaufort Boundary," Anchorage Daily News, March 7, 2010, <https://www.adn.com/economy/article/us-canada-do-battle-over-beaufort-boundary/2010/03/07/>.

<sup>35</sup> Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. "2016 Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Resources (UTRR) by Play." 2017.

[https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/oil-and-gas-energy-program/Resource-Evaluation/Resource-Assessment/2016-UTRR-by-Play\\_2017-update-%281%29.pdf](https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/oil-and-gas-energy-program/Resource-Evaluation/Resource-Assessment/2016-UTRR-by-Play_2017-update-%281%29.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> BOEM. (2021). 2021 Undiscovered Technically Recoverable Resources (UTRR) by Play. Retrieved July, 2024, from

<https://www.boem.gov/sites/default/files/documents/oil-gas-energy/resource-evaluation/2021%20UTRR%20by%20Play.pdf>

logistics. The bill also commissions an evaluation on how development of OCS resources could supply fuel and materials for the Department of Defense and U.S. allies, and an analysis of how preventing realization of offshore energy receipts (bonuses, rents, and royalties) from producing these undiscovered resources could impact funding for states and coastal political subdivisions under federal laws that support coastal protection, conservation and cultural preservation. Lastly, Section 3 of the bill requires the Secretary of the Interior to publish a comparative analysis of offshore oil and gas practices among major producing countries 1 year after enactment and every 10 years thereafter, comparing U.S. leasing practices to those of other offshore producing countries to assess our competitiveness.

The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a legislative hearing on the CORE Act on July 23, 2024.<sup>37</sup> Provisions that have changed in the current version include the addition of the Transboundary hydrocarbon analysis, U.S.-Canada collaborative boundary delineation instructions, changes to agency roles from Secretary of Defense to Secretary of State, addition of non-energy mineral resource analyses, and comparative analysis of other offshore producing countries' practices to those of the United States.

<b>CORE Act Improvements vs. Current Process Deficiencies</b>		
	<b>Proposed Improvements in the CORE Act</b>	<b>Key Deficiencies in Current Processes</b>
<b>Data Inputs</b>	Prioritizes the use of advanced geophysical and geotechnical data, along with new modeling technologies, to improve resource estimates.	Existing resource assessments rely on outdated data and lack advanced technological integration, leading to uncertainty in resource estimates.
<b>Economic Considerations</b>	Assesses the impact of undiscovered resource production on the U.S. economy under different production scenarios, considering market dynamics and technological advancements.	There is insufficient analysis of the economic effects of expanded offshore production on the U.S. economy and on trade deficits.
<b>Environmental Considerations</b>	Evaluates the potential net greenhouse gas emission reductions from replacing imported oil and gas with domestic resources.	Current assessments do not fully account for the potential environmental benefits of domestic oil and gas production compared to imports which would occur as a result of non-production
<b>Transboundary Resource Management</b>	Enhances the assessment and management of transboundary hydrocarbon reservoirs, including legal frameworks and cooperation mechanisms with neighboring countries.	Transboundary Resources are not currently considered or specifically discussed in assessments and lack comprehensive analysis.

Analysis of the current BOEM process and the changes made by the bill

<sup>37</sup> Legislative Hearing on H.R. 7053, H.R. 8665 & H.R. 8954 | Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee <https://naturalresources.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=416291>

## **H.R. 3168 (Rep. Valadao), “National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2025”**

The USGS is in charge of monitoring and reporting earthquakes, assessing damage, and researching their causes and effects.<sup>38</sup> The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP)<sup>39</sup> is aimed at gaining a better understanding of earthquakes while also reducing risks in the United States.<sup>40</sup> NEHRP is a joint agency effort led by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), with help from the USGS, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).<sup>41</sup> These agencies work together to conduct science, but they also have individual goals for mitigating damage from earthquakes.

NEHRP was first authorized in 1977<sup>42</sup> with the goal of managing the impacts of earthquakes on life, property, and the economy.<sup>43</sup> The program was designed to achieve this goal through a large, coordinated effort between the community of earthquake professionals in academia, businesses, government agencies, and codes and standards organizations that develop earthquake building codes.<sup>44</sup> NEHRP has been reauthorized several times, and most recently in 2018.<sup>45</sup> This reauthorization in 2018 established the first operational earthquake early warning system in the United States aptly named ShakeAlert.<sup>46</sup>

Currently, ShakeAlert operates in California, Oregon, and Washington and aims to provide alerts to people who are in the affected areas of an earthquake.<sup>47</sup> This application, run by the USGS, can save thousands of lives and millions of dollars by alerting an individual’s phone or other electronic device, notifying them that an earthquake has been detected. The application has successfully been integrated into several industries across the West Coast, specifically on the Metrolink in Southern California<sup>48</sup> It has been integrated into Metrolink’s Positive Train Control systems to automatically slow or stop trains when an alert is received.<sup>49</sup>

H.R. 3168 reauthorizes NEHRP through FY 2030.

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<sup>38</sup> USGS, Earthquake Hazards Program, <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/earthquake-hazards>

<sup>39</sup> 42 U.S.C. 7704

<sup>40</sup> CRS Reports, The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP): Overview and Issues for Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R43141>

<sup>41</sup> *Id.*

<sup>42</sup> 42 U.S.C. 7704

<sup>43</sup> FEMA, The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) Overview, [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_nehrp\\_overview\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20NEHRP%20is%20to%20coordinate,reduce%20the%20costs%20of%20losses%20and%20recovery.&text=Under%20NEHRP%2C%20FEMA%20is%20responsible%20for%20developing,development%20of%20disaster-resistant%20building%20codes%20and%20standards.](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_nehrp_overview_fact_sheet.pdf#:~:text=The%20role%20of%20NEHRP%20is%20to%20coordinate,reduce%20the%20costs%20of%20losses%20and%20recovery.&text=Under%20NEHRP%2C%20FEMA%20is%20responsible%20for%20developing,development%20of%20disaster-resistant%20building%20codes%20and%20standards.)

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*

<sup>45</sup> P.L. 115-307

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*

<sup>48</sup> ShakeAlert, Case Studies, <https://www.shakealert.org/education-and-outreach/case-studies/>

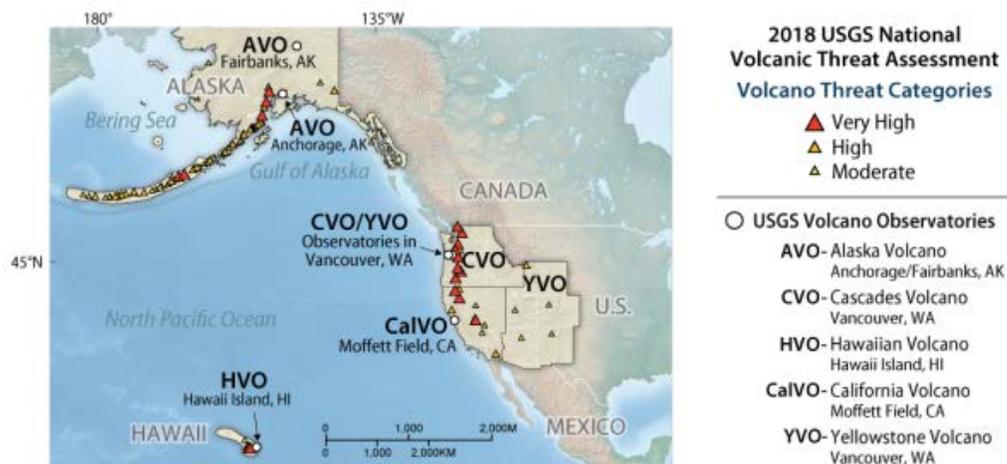
<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

## **H.R. 3176 (Rep. Begich), To amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System.**

The United States currently has about 170 young volcanoes, and roughly half of those pose a threat due to their proximity to communities and the intensity of their eruptions.<sup>50</sup> Many of these volcanoes are not adequately monitored, and others have no monitoring equipment.<sup>51</sup>

The National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System (NVEWS)<sup>52</sup> was established in 2019 through the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act.<sup>53</sup> This program was new in 2019 and falls under the Volcano Hazards Program (VHP) which has existed since 1980 and is also administered by USGS.<sup>54</sup> Congress authorized appropriations of \$55 million for NVEWS from FY 2019 through FY 2023. In FY 2022, Congress appropriated an additional \$2.2 million for NVEWS implementation and \$1.8 million for the Mount Rainier lahar detection system out of the \$33.3 million appropriated to the VHP.<sup>55</sup> The authorization for NVEWS expired at the end of FY 2023, but its programs have continued to operate as a part of VHP.

The USGS operates many volcano observatories across the country, the hubs of which are located in Alaska, California, Hawaii, and Washington.<sup>56</sup> These observatories electronically monitor and research volcanoes while remaining far enough away from the danger of an eruption. These observatories are outfitted with seismometers, GPS receivers, and gas sniffers to track seismicity or detect volcanic gas in the surrounding area.<sup>57</sup>



Source: USGS, Five-Year Management Plan for Establishing and Operating NVEWS: The National Volcano Early Warning System

<sup>50</sup> USGS, National Volcano Early Warning System - monitoring volcanoes according to their threat, <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/VHP/national-volcano-early-warning-system-monitoring-volcanoes-according-their-threat>

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*

<sup>52</sup> 43 U.S.C. 31k

<sup>53</sup> P.L. 116-9

<sup>54</sup> USGS, California Roots of the USGS volcano Hazards Program, <https://www.usgs.gov/observatories/calvo/news/california-roots-usgs-volcano-hazards-program#:~:text=This%20new%20program%20fulfilled%20a,the%20former%20Geothermal%20Research%20Program.>

<sup>55</sup> CRS Reports, The National Volcano Early Warning System, <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11987>

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*

<sup>57</sup> USGS, Cascades Volcano Observatory, <https://www.usgs.gov/cascades-volcano-observatory>

The goal of NVEWS is to monitor the most active and hazardous volcanoes to give ample time to evacuate the communities in the surrounding area of the volcano.<sup>58</sup> Hawaii is the most at risk state as the islands themselves are active volcanoes, so the nearby cities must be prepared for potential eruptions. Additionally, Alaska has the most volcanoes in its borders of any state at over 130 volcanoes and volcanic fields, and more than 50 have been active in the last 300 years.<sup>59</sup>

H.R. 3176 reauthorizes NVEWS through FY 2030.

#### IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & ANALYSIS

##### **H.R. 513** (Rep. Higgins), “*Offshore Lands Authorities Act of 2025*”

###### **Section 2: Nullification of Specific Withdrawals:**

- Revokes eight Presidential memoranda and executive orders from 2014 to 2025 that withdrew offshore lands from mineral leasing, including areas in the Arctic, Atlantic, Gulf of America, and Pacific.

###### **Section 3: Limitation of authority of the President to withdraw unleased offshore lands.**

- **Withdrawal Restrictions (Section 12(a)(2)):**
  - Limits withdrawals to 150,000 acres per action, non-contiguous with other withdrawals, and caps the duration of each withdrawal at 20 years. A President’s cumulative withdrawals are restricted to 500,000 acres without Congressional approval. These constraints aim to prevent broad, indefinite restrictions on offshore energy development while balancing executive flexibility.
- **Mandatory Assessments (Section 12(a)(3)):**
  - Requires the Secretary of the Interior to conduct mineral resource assessments within five years before a withdrawal, alongside economic, energy, and national security evaluations. Assessments must also quantify revenue losses to federal and state entities. These requirements ensure data-driven decisions, highlighting the impacts of withdrawals on the American economy.
- **Congressional Disapproval Mechanism (Section 12(a)(4)):**
  - Establishes a joint resolution process for Congress to disapprove withdrawals, with expedited Senate procedures. Disapproved withdrawals lose effect, and substantially similar withdrawals are barred without legislation. This empowers Congress to check executive overreach and maintain access to offshore resources.
- **Judicial Review (Section 12(a)(4)(G)):**
  - Prohibits judicial review of actions under the disapproval process, shielding Congressional decisions from legal challenges and ensuring swift resolution of disputes over withdrawals.

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<sup>58</sup> *Id.*

<sup>59</sup> USGS, Where can I find information about volcanoes in Alaska? <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/where-can-i-find-information-about-volcanoes-alaska#:~:text=Alaska%20contains%20over%20130%20volcanoes,for%20information%20on%20Alaska%20Volcanoes.>

- **Alignment with Leasing Programs (Section 12(a)(5)):**
  - Prohibits withdrawals that conflict with approved 5-year oil and gas leasing programs under Section 18 of OCSLA. This ensures consistency with established energy development plans, minimizing disruptions to leasing schedules.

**H.R. 931 (Rep. Downing), To allow certain Federal minerals to be mined consistent with the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification**

- Authorizes all Federal coal reserves in Montana leased under Lease MTM 97988 to be mined in accordance with the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification.

**H.R. 2250 (Rep. DelBene), “National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act of 2025”**

- Reauthorizes NLHRP through FY 2030. Increases the previous authorization level by \$10 million from \$25 million to \$35 million per year.
- Reauthorizes 3DEP through FY 2030. Maintains the previous authorization level of \$40 million per year.

**H.R. 2556 (Rep. Hunt), “Comprehensive Offshore Resource Enhancement Act of 2025” or the “CORE Act of 2025”**

**SEC. 2. Assessment of Offshore Resources**

- **Transboundary Hydrocarbon Report (Section 2(b)):**
  - Requires the Secretaries of Energy, Interior, and State to submit a report within 18 months on transboundary hydrocarbon reservoirs. The report will identify reservoirs, analyze legal frameworks, evaluate economic and geopolitical implications, and recommend cooperative mechanisms with neighboring countries.
- **Standardized Resource Inventories (Section 2(c)):**
  - Amends 42 U.S.C. § 15912 to mandate the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with other agencies, to conduct offshore resource inventories every five years in the OCS. Inventories assess undiscovered resources, economic impacts, national security, and revenue effects of land withdrawals. This ensures regular, comprehensive data to guide leasing and policy decisions.
- **Model Updates and Assessments (Section 2(c)):**
  - Requires the Secretary to assess and update resource inventory models every 10 years, starting within one year of enactment, in consultation with industry experts.

**SEC. 3. Comparative Analysis of Offshore Practices**

- **Global Offshore Production Analysis:**
  - Mandates a comparative analysis every 10 years of offshore oil and gas practices in major producing countries. The analysis covers leasing acres, auction

frequency, production volumes, and resource estimates, using USGS data and advanced technologies. This informs U.S. policy by benchmarking against global competitors, enhancing competitiveness and energy diversification.

**H.R. 3168 (Rep. Valadao), “*National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2025*”**

- Reauthorizes NEHRP through FY 2030. Maintains the previous authorization level of \$83.4 million per year.

**H.R. 3176 (Rep. Begich), *To amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System***

- Reauthorizes NVEWS through FY 2030. Maintains the previous authorization level of \$55 million over 5 years..

**V. COST**

A formal cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is not available.

**VI. ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION**

Unknown.

**VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)**

[H.R. 513](#)

[H.R. 2250](#)

[H.R. 2556](#)

[H.R. 3168](#)

[H.R. 3176](#)