

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 22, 2013

The Honorable Tommy Beaudreau  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Land and Minerals Management  
U.S. Department of Interior  
Washington, DC

Re: Proposed Oil Shale Regulations Comment Period Extension Request

Dear Assistant Secretary Beaudreau:

We write to request that you provide a 60-day extension to the comment period on Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) proposed changes to the commercial oil shale regulations. 78 Fed. Reg. 18547 (March 27, 2013).

Section 369 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15927) requires the Secretary to lease federal lands in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado for the development and research of oil shale. Following an extensive and thorough public comment process, BLM published a Record of Decision (ROD) in 2008 for Oil Shale development on approximately 1.9 million acres of federal lands in Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming. Litigation brought by environmental groups forced the BLM into a settlement that amended the plan and reduced acreage for potential oil shale development to only 679,000 acres. The new ROD, published in February 2013, also proposes significant changes to the oil shale commercial leasing program.

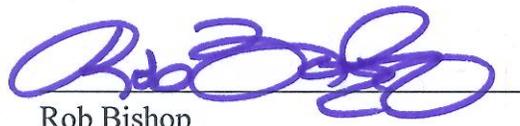
The recent ROD made major changes in comparison to the 2008 oil shale regulations. For example, research, development, and demonstration leases will not be converted to commercial leases unless the agency determines that oil shale operations can occur without "unacceptable environmental risk" – a nebulous term that the agency admits will "likely evolve." This additional step is outside of, and duplicative to, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Additionally, the Energy Policy Act of 2005 requires "the agency to establish royalties and other payments for oil shale leases that shall encourage development of the oil shale" resources. However, the BLM proposes to replace the current royalty rates. These proposed changes could have significant business impacts and could deter investment in American energy development.

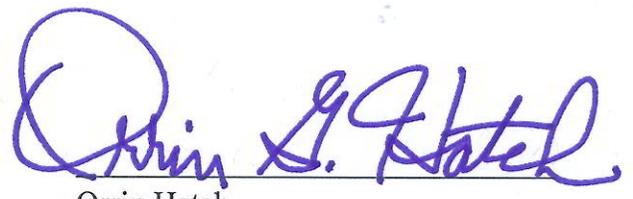
Additional time is necessary to undergo a thorough economic analysis to study the proposed royalty changes.

Proper analysis and thoughtful input from interested stakeholders are absolutely critical in establishing a proper rate structure and determining whether these regulations reduce the economic benefit of oil shale production. The current comment deadline is May 28, 2013. We respectfully request an additional 60 days so that interested parties can properly and adequately respond to the agency's proposed changes.

Sincerely,



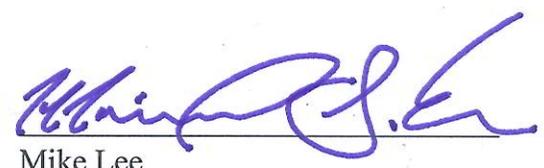
Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress



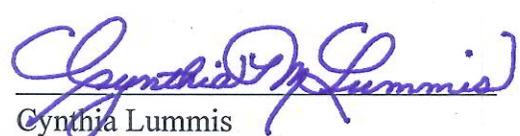
Orrin Hatch  
U.S. Senator



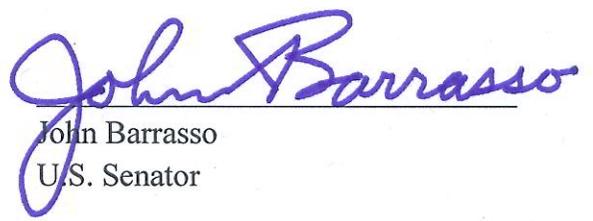
Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress



Mike Lee  
U.S. Senator



Cynthia Lummis  
Member of Congress



John Barrasso  
U.S. Senator



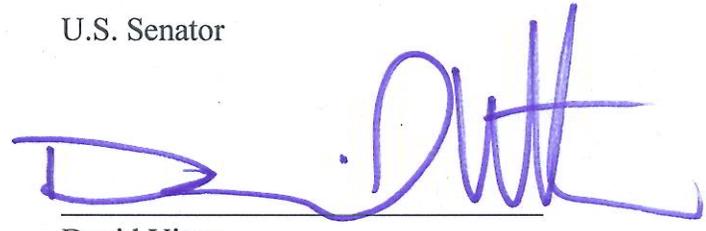
Jim Matheson  
Member of Congress



Mike Enzi  
U.S. Senator



Stevan Pearce  
Member of Congress



David Vitter  
U.S. Senator



Jason Chaffetz  
Member of Congress



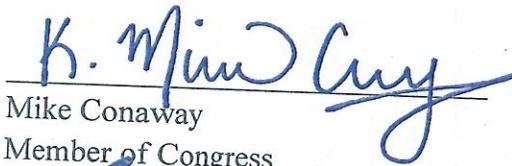
James M. Inhofe  
U.S. Senator



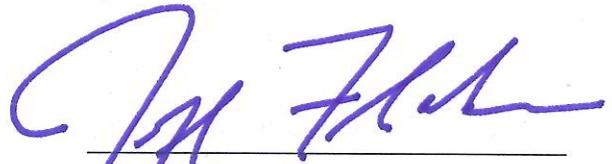
Chris Stewart  
Member of Congress



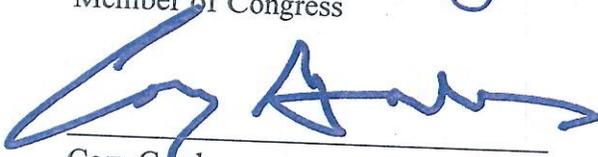
John McCain  
U.S. Senator



Mike Conaway  
Member of Congress



Jeff Flake  
U.S. Senator



Cory Gardner  
Member of Congress



Paul Gosar  
Member of Congress