



July 11, 2016

Chairman Rob Bishop
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Jason Chaffetz
Oversight & Government Reform Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2236 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Bishop and Chaffetz:

Western Energy Alliance very much appreciates your leadership in finding solutions to some of Utah's intractable public lands issues. We welcome the introduction of the Public Lands Initiative today, and stand ready to work with you to help ensure its success.

We have been honored to participate in the PLI process as one of more than 120 partners. We understand that when there are multiple stakeholders with diverse interests, the need for compromise is paramount and not any one interest will get everything it wants. Given the complexity of the bill, as it attempts to conserve millions of acres in Utah while encouraging productive uses on other lands, the risk remains that there will be some lands with oil and natural gas resources that will be designated for conservation only. We continue to emphasize that designations that lock away lands from energy development should be minimized, as oil and natural gas leaves a small and temporary impact on the land and coexists with other multiple uses of public lands such as recreation, ranching and protecting natural resource values.

As we've learned from the shale revolution, industry is able to tap new resources like the Bakken and Eagle Ford that we couldn't develop just ten years ago. The U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) recent assessment of the Mancos Shale formation as the second highest shale gas resource in the country after the Marcellus is a reminder that what we know today can change overnight. USGS hasn't even assessed the Mancos Shale in Utah, which could likewise represent future opportunity.

Western Energy Alliance remains strongly committed to finding solutions for encouraging oil and natural gas exploration and production on appropriate public lands. We continue to strongly support the Public Lands Initiative, and look forward to working with you on particular measures to encourage energy development, particularly in the highly productive Uinta Basin. Delegating leasing, permitting, inspections, and other aspects of the federal oil and gas program to the State of Utah represents a promising opportunity to encourage energy development on federal lands that remain open. We wholeheartedly support the approach suggested by the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC) to delegate regulation of oil and gas operations on federal public lands to the states and believe an opportunity exists for a pilot program in the Uinta Basin.

Thank you for introducing the bill. We remain a committed partner in the PLI process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathleen M. Sgamma", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kathleen M. Sgamma
Vice President of Government & Public Affairs