

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1470

To promote timely exploration for geothermal resources under existing geothermal leases, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 2, 2011

Mr. CRAPO (for himself and Mr. RISCH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To promote timely exploration for geothermal resources under existing geothermal leases, and for other purposes.

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 “Exploring for Geo-
5 thermal Energy on Federal Lands Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. GEOTHERMAL EXPLORATION NOTICE AND EXCLU-**
7 **SION.**

8 (a) DEFINITION OF GEOTHERMAL EXPLORATION
9 TEST PROJECT.—In this section the term “geothermal ex-
10 ploration test project” means the drilling of a well to test

1 or explore for geothermal resources on lands leased by the
2 Department of the Interior for the development and pro-
3 duction of geothermal resources, that—

4 (1) is carried out by the holder of the lease;

5 (2) causes—

6 (A) less than 1 acre of soil or vegetation
7 disruption at the location of each geothermal
8 exploration well; and

9 (B) not more than 5 acres of soil or vege-
10 tation disruption during access or egress to the
11 test site;

12 (3) is developed—

13 (A) no deeper than 2,500 feet;

14 (B) less than 8 inches in diameter;

15 (C) in a manner that does not require off-
16 road motorized access other than to and from
17 the well site along an identified off-road route
18 for which notice is provided to the Secretary of
19 the Interior under subsection (c);

20 (D) without construction of new roads
21 other than upgrading of existing drainage cross-
22 ings for safety purposes; and

23 (E) with the use of rubber-tired digging or
24 drilling equipment vehicles; and

1 (4) is completed in less than 45 days, includ-
2 ing—

3 (A) removal of any surface infrastructure
4 from the site; and

5 (B) restoration of the project site to ap-
6 proximately the condition that existed at the
7 time the project began.

8 (b) NEPA EXCLUSION.—Section 102(2)(C) of the
9 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.
10 4321 et seq.) shall not apply with respect to a project that
11 the Secretary of the Interior determines under subsection
12 (c) is a geothermal exploration test project.

13 (c) NOTICE OF INTENT; REVIEW AND DETERMINA-
14 TION.—

15 (1) REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE NOTICE.—A
16 leaseholder intending to carry out a geothermal ex-
17 ploration test project shall provide notice to the Sec-
18 retary of the Interior not later than 30 days prior
19 to the start of drilling under the project.

20 (2) REVIEW OF PROJECT.—The Secretary shall
21 by not later than 10 days after receipt of a notice
22 of intent under paragraph (1) from a leaseholder—

23 (A) review the project described in the no-
24 tice and determine whether it is a geothermal
25 exploration test project under subsection (a);

1 (B) notify the leaseholder—

2 (i) that under subsection (b) of this
3 section, section 102(2)(C) of the National
4 Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42
5 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) does not apply to the
6 project; or

7 (ii) that section 102(2)(C) of the Na-
8 tional Environmental Policy Act of 1969
9 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) applies to the
10 project, including clear and detailed find-
11 ings on any deficiencies in the project that
12 preclude the application of subsection (b)
13 of this section to the project.

14 (3) OPPORTUNITY TO REMEDY.—If the Sec-
15 retary provides notice under paragraph (2)(B)(ii)
16 that section 102(2)(C) of the National Environ-
17 mental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)
18 applies to the project, the Secretary shall provide the
19 leaseholder an opportunity to remedy the deficiencies
20 described in the notice prior to the date the lease-
21 holder intended to start of drilling under the project.

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