

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3762

To provide greater output, price stability, and regulatory certainty with respect to domestic energy production in the United States and exports, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 3, 2022

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

A BILL

To provide greater output, price stability, and regulatory certainty with respect to domestic energy production in the United States and exports, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Energy Freedom Act”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definition of Secretary.

TITLE I—ACCELERATING ENERGY APPROVALS TO REDUCE BOTTLENECKS

- Sec. 101. Findings.
- Sec. 102. Review and approval of certain natural gas transmission projects.
- Sec. 103. Expedited approval for certain natural gas interstate pipelines.
- Sec. 104. Natural gas exports.
- Sec. 105. Pending applications to export natural gas.
- Sec. 106. Domestic environmental impacts.
- Sec. 107. No Presidential permit required.

TITLE II—UTILIZING AMERICA’S ONSHORE RESOURCES

- Sec. 201. Finding.
- Sec. 202. Annual oil and natural gas lease sales.
- Sec. 203. Permit to drill application timeline.
- Sec. 204. Congressional authority requirement.
- Sec. 205. Prohibition on moratoria of new energy leases on certain Federal land and on withdrawal of Federal land from energy development.

TITLE III—OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF LEASING

- Sec. 301. Finding.
- Sec. 302. Offshore lease sales.

TITLE IV—ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

- Sec. 401. Geothermal, solar, and wind leasing priority areas.
- Sec. 402. Geothermal production on Federal lands.
- Sec. 403. Alternative energy and minerals with respect to territories of the United States.
- Sec. 404. Hardrock mineral licensing.

TITLE V—STOPPING EXECUTIVE OVERREACH

- Sec. 501. Finding.
- Sec. 502. Navigable Waters Protection Rule.
- Sec. 503. Methane rule.
- Sec. 504. ONRR 2020 Valuation Reform and Civil Penalty Rule.
- Sec. 505. NEPA rule.
- Sec. 506. Nationwide permit 12.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF SECRETARY.**

2 In this Act, the term “Secretary” means the Sec-
 3 retary of the Interior.

1 **TITLE I—ACCELERATING EN-**
 2 **ERGY APPROVALS TO RE-**
 3 **DUCE BOTTLENECKS**

4 **SEC. 101. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds that—

6 (1) natural gas is a safe and abundant resource
 7 and is proven to be environmentally responsible; and

8 (2) increasing the safe transmission of natural
 9 gas will lead to more reliable, abundant, and cleaner
 10 domestic supplies of energy that will contribute to
 11 job growth and economic development.

12 **SEC. 102. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF CERTAIN NATURAL**
 13 **GAS TRANSMISSION PROJECTS.**

14 (a) FERC APPROVALS.—Section 7(e) of the Natural
 15 Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717f(e)) is amended—

16 (1) in the second sentence, by striking “The
 17 Commission” and inserting the following:

18 “(3) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Commis-
 19 sion”;

20 (2) by striking “(e) Except” and inserting the
 21 following:

22 “(e) APPLICATION PROCEDURE.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except”; and

24 (3) by inserting after paragraph (1) (as so des-
 25 ignated) the following:

1 “(2) DEADLINE FOR PROCESSING APPLICA-
2 TIONS.—

3 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year
4 after the date on which the Commission receives
5 an application for a certificate of public conven-
6 ience and necessity under subsection (c), the
7 Commission shall—

8 “(i) complete all required consulta-
9 tions with other Federal agencies;

10 “(ii) review the application in accord-
11 ance with the requirements of this section;
12 and

13 “(iii) issue the certificate or deny the
14 application.

15 “(B) REASONS FOR DENIAL.—If the Com-
16 mission denies an application under subpara-
17 graph (A)(iii), the Commission shall state the
18 reasons for the denial.”.

19 (b) CORPS OF ENGINEERS APPROVALS.—

20 (1) DEFINITION OF COVERED AUTHORIZA-
21 TION.—In this subsection, the term “covered author-
22 ization” means an authorization or approval re-
23 quired under Federal law from the Secretary of the
24 Army for any natural gas transmission project, in-
25 cluding an authorization—

1 (A) under section 404 of the Federal
2 Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1344);

3 (B) under section 10 of the Act of March
4 3, 1899 (commonly known as the “Rivers and
5 Harbors Act of 1899”) (30 Stat. 1151, chapter
6 425; 33 U.S.C. 403);

7 (C) for an easement under section 28 of
8 the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 185);

9 (D) for permission under section 14 of the
10 Act of March 3, 1899 (commonly known as the
11 “Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899”) (30 Stat.
12 1152, chapter 425; 33 U.S.C. 408);

13 (E) under the National Environmental
14 Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);
15 and

16 (F) any other applicable Federal law.

17 (2) REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary of the
18 Army shall—

19 (A) approve or deny an application or re-
20 quest for a covered authorization, including the
21 completion of any required consultations with
22 other Federal agencies, by not later than 1 year
23 after the date on which the application or re-
24 quest is submitted; and

1 (B) if the application or request for a cov-
 2 ered authorization is denied, provide to the ap-
 3 plicant or requester the reasons for the denial.

4 **SEC. 103. EXPEDITED APPROVAL FOR CERTAIN NATURAL**
 5 **GAS INTERSTATE PIPELINES.**

6 Section 7(c)(1) of the Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C.
 7 717f)(c)(1)) is amended—

8 (1) in subparagraph (A)—

9 (A) in the first sentence, by striking “or
 10 operations: *Provided, however,* That if any
 11 such” and inserting the following: “or oper-
 12 ations.

13 “(ii) PRIOR OPERATIONS.—If any
 14 such”; and

15 (B) by adding at the end the following:

16 “(iii) PROJECTS THAT MEET SAFETY
 17 REGULATIONS.—With respect to any appli-
 18 cation for a certificate of public conven-
 19 ience and necessity under clause (i) for
 20 which the Commission determines that the
 21 project covered by the application meets all
 22 safety regulations in effect as of the date
 23 of the application, the Commission shall
 24 issue the certificate without requiring fur-
 25 ther proof that public convenience and ne-

1 cessity will be served by the project, and
2 without further proceedings.”;

3 (2) by striking “(c)(1)(A) No natural-gas com-
4 pany” and inserting the following:

5 “(c) CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND
6 NECESSITY.—

7 “(1) APPLICATIONS.—

8 “(A) REQUIREMENT TO APPLY FOR CER-
9 TIFICATE.—

10 “(i) IN GENERAL.—No natural-gas
11 company”; and

12 (3) in subparagraph (B), by striking “(B) In all
13 other cases the Commission” and inserting the fol-
14 lowing:

15 “(B) HEARINGS.—In all cases other than
16 the cases described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of
17 subparagraph (A), the Commission”.

18 **SEC. 104. NATURAL GAS EXPORTS.**

19 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

20 (1) increasing clean and safe natural gas ex-
21 ports will lead to increased investment and develop-
22 ment of domestic supplies of natural gas that will
23 contribute to job growth and economic development;
24 and

1 (2) the export of clean and safe natural gas to
2 other nations is of vital national interest to the
3 United States.

4 (b) NATURAL GAS EXPORTS.—Section 3(c) of the
5 Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717b(c)) is amended—

6 (1) by inserting “or any other nation not ex-
7 cluded by this section” after “trade in natural gas”;

8 (2) by inserting “and in any event by not later
9 than 60 days after the date on which the application
10 is received” before the period at the end;

11 (3) by striking “(c) For purposes” and insert-
12 ing the following:

13 “(c) EXPEDITED APPLICATION AND APPROVAL
14 PROCESS.—

15 “(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes”; and

16 (4) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(2) EXCLUSIONS.—

18 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Any nation subject to
19 sanctions or trade restrictions imposed by the
20 United States is excluded from expedited ap-
21 proval under paragraph (1).

22 “(B) DESIGNATION BY PRESIDENT OR
23 CONGRESS.—The President or Congress may
24 designate nations that may be excluded from

1 expedited approval under paragraph (1) for rea-
2 sons of national security.

3 “(3) ORDER NOT REQUIRED.—No order is re-
4 quired under subsection (a) to authorize the export
5 or import of any natural gas to or from Canada or
6 Mexico.”.

7 **SEC. 105. PENDING APPLICATIONS TO EXPORT NATURAL**
8 **GAS.**

9 All applications to export natural gas from the United
10 States to a foreign country submitted under section 3(a)
11 of the Natural Gas Act (15 U.S.C. 717b(a)) during the
12 period beginning on January 1, 2020, and ending on Jan-
13 uary 1, 2025, are deemed approved.

14 **SEC. 106. DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 102(2) of the National
16 Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2))
17 is amended—

18 (1) in subparagraph (C)—

19 (A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by
20 inserting “in the United States” after “human
21 environment”;

22 (B) in clause (i), by inserting “in the
23 United States” after “proposed action”; and

1 (C) in clause (ii), by inserting “in the
2 United States” after “environmental effects”;
3 and

4 (2) in subparagraph (F), by inserting “in any
5 proposal or other major Federal action that involves
6 the funding or development of projects outside the
7 United States or the exclusive economic zone of the
8 United States,” before “recognize”.

9 (b) IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS.—Not later than
10 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Council
11 on Environmental Quality shall revise the implementing
12 regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act of
13 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) under subchapter A of
14 chapter V of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or suc-
15 cessor regulations), in accordance with the amendments
16 made by subsection (a).

17 **SEC. 107. NO PRESIDENTIAL PERMIT REQUIRED.**

18 No Presidential permit (or similar permit) required
19 under Executive Order 13337 (3 U.S.C. 301 note; 69 Fed.
20 Reg. 25299 (April 30, 2004)), Executive Order 11423 (3
21 U.S.C. 301 note; 33 Fed. Reg. 11741 (August 16, 1968)),
22 section 301 of title 3, United States Code, Executive
23 Order 12038 (43 Fed. Reg. 3674 (January 26, 1978)),
24 Executive Order 10485 (18 Fed. Reg. 5397 (September
25 9, 1953)), or any other Executive order shall be necessary

1 for the construction, connection, operation, or maintenance of an oil or natural gas pipeline or electric transmission facility, or any cross-border segment thereof.

4 **TITLE II—UTILIZING AMERICA'S** 5 **ONSHORE RESOURCES**

6 **SEC. 201. FINDING.**

7 Congress finds that regular and predictable leasing
8 and permitting on Federal land is important to domestic
9 energy production, which leads to robust competition and
10 lower energy prices.

11 **SEC. 202. ANNUAL OIL AND NATURAL GAS LEASE SALES.**

12 (a) ANNUAL LEASE SALES.—Notwithstanding any
13 other provision of law, in accordance with the Mineral
14 Leasing Act (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.), beginning in fiscal
15 year 2022, the Secretary shall conduct a minimum of 4
16 oil and natural gas lease sales annually in each of the following States:

- 18 (1) Wyoming.
- 19 (2) New Mexico.
- 20 (3) Colorado.
- 21 (4) Utah.
- 22 (5) Montana.
- 23 (6) North Dakota.
- 24 (7) Oklahoma.
- 25 (8) Nevada.

1 (9) Alaska.

2 (10) Any other State in which there is land
3 available for oil and natural gas leasing under that
4 Act.

5 (b) REQUIREMENT.—In conducting a lease sale under
6 subsection (a) in a State described in that subsection, the
7 Secretary shall offer all parcels eligible for oil and gas de-
8 velopment under the resource management plan in effect
9 for the State.

10 (c) REPLACEMENT SALES.—If, for any reason, a
11 lease sale under subsection (a) for a calendar year is can-
12 celed, delayed, or deferred, including for a lack of eligible
13 parcels, the Secretary shall conduct a replacement sale
14 during the same calendar year.

15 **SEC. 203. PERMIT TO DRILL APPLICATION TIMELINE.**

16 Section 17(p) of the Mineral Leasing Act (30 U.S.C.
17 226(p)) is amended by striking paragraph (2) and insert-
18 ing the following:

19 “(2) APPLICATIONS FOR PERMITS TO DRILL RE-
20 FORM AND PROCESS.—

21 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the
22 end of the 30-day period beginning on the date
23 an application for a permit to drill is received
24 by the Secretary, the Secretary shall decide
25 whether to issue the permit.

1 “(B) EXTENSION.—

2 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary
3 may extend the period described in sub-
4 paragraph (A) for up to 2 periods of 15
5 days each, if the Secretary has given writ-
6 ten notice of the delay to the applicant.

7 “(ii) NOTICE.—The notice shall—

8 “(I) be in the form of a letter
9 from the Secretary or a designee of
10 the Secretary; and

11 “(II) include—

12 “(aa) the names and titles
13 of the persons processing the ap-
14 plication;

15 “(bb) the specific reasons
16 for the delay; and

17 “(cc) a specific date a final
18 decision on the application is ex-
19 pected.

20 “(C) NOTICE OF REASONS FOR DENIAL.—

21 If the application is denied, the Secretary shall
22 provide the applicant—

23 “(i) a written statement that provides
24 clear and comprehensive reasons why the
25 application was not accepted and detailed

1 information concerning any deficiencies;
2 and

3 “(ii) an opportunity to remedy any de-
4 ficiencies.

5 “(D) APPLICATION DEEMED APPROVED.—

6 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as pro-
7 vided in clause (ii), if the Secretary has
8 not made a decision on the application by
9 the end of the 60-day period beginning on
10 the date the application is received by the
11 Secretary, the application shall be consid-
12 ered approved.

13 “(ii) EXCEPTIONS.—Clause (i) shall
14 not apply in cases in which existing reviews
15 under the National Environmental Policy
16 Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) or
17 Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16
18 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) are incomplete.

19 “(E) DENIAL OF PERMIT.—If the Sec-
20 retary decides not to issue a permit to drill
21 under this paragraph, the Secretary shall—

22 “(i) provide to the applicant a descrip-
23 tion of the reasons for the denial of the
24 permit;

1 “(ii) allow the applicant to resubmit
2 an application for a permit to drill during
3 the 10-day period beginning on the date
4 the applicant receives the description of
5 the denial from the Secretary; and

6 “(iii) issue or deny any resubmitted
7 application not later than 10 days after the
8 date the application is submitted to the
9 Secretary.

10 “(F) FEE.—

11 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding
12 any other provision of law, the Secretary
13 shall collect a single \$6,500 permit proc-
14 essing fee per application from each appli-
15 cant at the time the final decision is made
16 whether to issue a permit under subpara-
17 graph (A).

18 “(ii) RESUBMITTED APPLICATION.—
19 The fee required under clause (i) shall not
20 apply to any resubmitted application.

21 “(iii) TREATMENT OF PERMIT PROC-
22 ESSING FEE.—Subject to appropriation, of
23 all fees collected under this paragraph for
24 each fiscal year, 50 percent shall be—

1 “(I) transferred to the field office
 2 at which the fees are collected; and
 3 “(II) used to process protests,
 4 leases, and permits under this Act.”.

5 **SEC. 204. CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORITY REQUIREMENT.**

6 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Sec-
 7 retary may not declare a moratorium on the leasing of
 8 Federal land, including outer Continental Shelf land, for
 9 the drilling, mining, or collection of oil, gas, or coal, or
 10 for related activities, unless the moratorium is authorized
 11 by an Act of Congress.

12 **SEC. 205. PROHIBITION ON MORATORIA OF NEW ENERGY**
 13 **LEASES ON CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND AND ON**
 14 **WITHDRAWAL OF FEDERAL LAND FROM EN-**
 15 **ERGY DEVELOPMENT.**

16 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 (1) CRITICAL MINERAL.—The term “critical
 18 mineral” has the meaning given the term in section
 19 7002(a) of the Energy Act of 2020 (30 U.S.C.
 20 1606(a)).

21 (2) FEDERAL LAND.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “Federal
 23 land” means—

24 (i) National Forest System land;

(ii) public lands (as defined in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702));

(iii) the outer Continental Shelf (as defined in section 2 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331));

and

(iv) land managed by the Secretary of Energy.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Federal land” includes land described in clauses (i) through (iv) of subparagraph (A) for which the rights to the surface estate or subsurface estate are owned by a non-Federal entity.

(3) PRESIDENT.—The term “President” means the President or any designee of the President, including—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture;

(B) the Secretary of Energy; and

(C) the Secretary.

(b) PROHIBITIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not carry out any action that would prohibit or substantially delay the issuance of any of the following on Federal land,

1 unless such an action has been authorized by an Act
2 of Congress:

3 (A) New oil and gas leases, drill permits,
4 approvals, or authorizations.

5 (B) New coal leases, permits, approvals, or
6 authorizations.

7 (C) New hardrock leases, permits, approv-
8 als, or authorizations.

9 (D) New critical minerals leases, permits,
10 approvals, or authorizations.

11 (2) PROHIBITION ON WITHDRAWAL.—Notwith-
12 standing any other provision of law, the President
13 may not withdraw any Federal land from forms of
14 entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public
15 land laws, location, entry, and patent under the min-
16 ing laws, or disposition under laws pertaining to
17 mineral and geothermal leasing or mineral materials
18 unless the withdrawal has been authorized by an Act
19 of Congress.

20 **TITLE III—OUTER CONTINENTAL** 21 **SHELF LEASING**

22 **SEC. 301. FINDING.**

23 Congress finds that regular and predictable leasing
24 and permitting on the outer Continental Shelf is impor-

1 tant to domestic energy production, which leads to robust
 2 competition and low energy prices.

3 **SEC. 302. OFFSHORE LEASE SALES.**

4 (a) OFFSHORE LEASE SALES.—The Secretary shall
 5 conduct all lease sales described in the 2017–2022 Outer
 6 Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Proposed Final
 7 Program (November 2016) that have not been conducted
 8 as of the date of enactment of this Act by not later than
 9 December 31, 2022.

10 (b) CENTRAL AND WESTERN GULF OF MEXICO RE-
 11 GION ANNUAL LEASE SALES.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
 13 provision of law, if a final 2023–2027 oil and gas
 14 leasing program is not approved under section 18(a)
 15 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43
 16 U.S.C. 1344(a)) by July 1, 2022, the Secretary shall
 17 conduct a minimum of 2 region-wide oil and natural
 18 gas lease sales annually in the Gulf of Mexico Re-
 19 gion of the outer Continental Shelf, which shall in-
 20 clude the following areas described in the 2017–
 21 2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing
 22 Proposed Final Program (November 2016):

23 (A) The Central Gulf of Mexico Planning
 24 Area.

1 (B) The Western Gulf of Mexico Planning
2 Area.

3 (2) TIMING.—The Secretary shall conduct the
4 first lease sales required under paragraph (1) in the
5 first and third quarters of calendar year 2023.

6 (3) INCLUSIONS.—Each lease sale required
7 under paragraph (1)—

8 (A) shall offer all unleased acres in the
9 Central Gulf of Mexico Planning Area and the
10 Western Gulf of Mexico Planning Area; and

11 (B) shall be subject to the same lease stip-
12 ulations, withdrawals, and moratoriums as were
13 included in Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental
14 Shelf Region-wide Oil and Gas Lease Sale 256
15 conducted on November 18, 2020.

16 (4) CONTINUATION.—The Secretary shall con-
17 duct lease sales annually under this subsection until
18 the date on which a new 5-year oil and gas leasing
19 program is approved and implemented under section
20 18(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43
21 U.S.C. 1344(a)).

22 (c) ALASKA REGION ANNUAL LEASE SALES.—Not-
23 withstanding any other provision of law, beginning in fis-
24 cal year 2022, the Secretary shall conduct a minimum of
25 2 region-wide oil and natural gas lease sales annually in

1 the Alaska Region of the outer Continental Shelf, as de-
 2 scribed in the 2017–2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and
 3 Gas Leasing Proposed Final Program (November 2016).

4 **TITLE IV—ALTERNATIVE** 5 **ENERGY**

6 **SEC. 401. GEOTHERMAL, SOLAR, AND WIND LEASING PRI-** 7 **ORITY AREAS.**

8 (a) DESIGNATION OF GEOTHERMAL, SOLAR, AND
 9 WIND LEASING PRIORITY AREAS.—As soon as prac-
 10 ticable, but not later than 1 year after the date of enact-
 11 ment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the
 12 Secretary of Energy, shall designate—

13 (1) 1 or more priority areas on Federal land for
 14 geothermal energy leasing;

15 (2) 1 or more priority areas on Federal land for
 16 solar energy leasing; and

17 (3) 1 or more priority areas on Federal land for
 18 wind energy leasing.

19 (b) CRITERIA FOR SELECTION.—In determining
 20 whether Federal land should be designated as a priority
 21 area for geothermal, solar, or wind energy leasing under
 22 subsection (a), the Secretary, in consultation with the Sec-
 23 retary of Energy, shall consider whether—

24 (1) production of geothermal, solar, or wind en-
 25 ergy on the Federal land is economically viable, in-

1 including whether the Federal land has access to exist-
 2 ing methods of energy transmission; and

3 (2) the designation would comply with section
 4 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management
 5 Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712), including subsection
 6 (c)(9) of that section.

7 (c) **TIMELINE FOR LEASING.**—As soon as practicable,
 8 but not later than 1 year, after designating the priority
 9 areas under subsection (a), the Secretary shall conduct,
 10 as applicable, geothermal, solar, or wind lease sales for
 11 the priority areas.

12 **SEC. 402. GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION ON FEDERAL LANDS.**

13 The Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 (30 U.S.C. 1001
 14 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

15 **“SEC. 30. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR GEOTHERMAL EX-
 16 PLORATION TEST PROJECTS.**

17 **“(a) REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE NOTICE.**—Not
 18 later than 30 days before the date on which the holder
 19 of a lease issued under this Act intends to begin carrying
 20 out a project the leaseholder believes is a geothermal ex-
 21 ploration test project, the leaseholder shall provide notice
 22 to the Secretary of the intent to carry out the geothermal
 23 exploration test project.

24 **“(b) REVIEW AND DETERMINATION.**—Not later than
 25 10 days after receipt of a notice of intent from a lease-

1 holder under subsection (a), the Secretary shall, with re-
 2 spect to the project described in the notice of intent—

3 “(1)(A) determine whether the project is a geo-
 4 thermal exploration test project; and

5 “(B) if so, determine whether the geothermal
 6 exploration test project qualifies for a categorical ex-
 7 clusion in accordance with subsection (c); and

8 “(2) notify the leaseholder of the determina-
 9 tions under paragraph (1).

10 “(c) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—Unless extraor-
 11 dinary circumstances exist, as determined by the Sec-
 12 retary, a project that the Secretary determines is a geo-
 13 thermal exploration test project under subsection
 14 (b)(1)(A) shall be categorically excluded from the require-
 15 ments for an environmental assessment or an environ-
 16 mental impact statement under the National Environ-
 17 mental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

18 “(d) OPPORTUNITY TO REMEDY.—If the Secretary
 19 determines under subsection (b)(1)(A) that a project is
 20 not a geothermal exploration test project or under sub-
 21 section (b)(1)(B) that a geothermal exploration test
 22 project does not qualify for a categorical exclusion because
 23 extraordinary circumstances exist, the Secretary shall—

24 “(1) include in the notice under subsection
 25 (b)(2) clear and detailed findings on any deficiencies

1 in the project that resulted in the determination;
 2 and

3 “(2) allow the leaseholder to remedy any such
 4 deficiencies and resubmit the notice of intent under
 5 subsection (a).”.

6 **SEC. 403. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY AND MINERALS WITH RE-**
 7 **SPECT TO TERRITORIES OF THE UNITED**
 8 **STATES.**

9 Section 2 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act
 10 (43 U.S.C. 1331) is amended—

11 (1) in subsection (a)—

12 (A) by striking “lying seaward” and insert-
 13 ing the following: “lying—

14 “(1) seaward”;

15 (B) in paragraph (1) (as so designated), by
 16 adding “or” after the semicolon at the end; and

17 (C) by adding at the end the following:

18 “(2) within the exclusive economic zone of the
 19 United States adjacent to any territory or possession
 20 (other than an area conveyed by Congress to a terri-
 21 torial government for administration);”;

22 (2) in subsection (p), by striking “and” after
 23 the semicolon at the end;

24 (3) in subsection (q), by striking the period at
 25 the end and inserting a semicolon; and

1 (4) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(r) The term ‘State’ means—

3 “(1) each of the several States; and

4 “(2) each territory or possession; and

5 “(s) The term ‘territory or possession’ means—

6 “(1) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

7 “(2) Guam;

8 “(3) American Samoa;

9 “(4) the United States Virgin Islands; and

10 “(5) the Commonwealth of the Northern Mar-
11 iana Islands.”.

12 **SEC. 404. HARDROCK MINERAL LICENSING.**

13 The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C.
14 1331 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
15 lowing:

16 **“SEC. 33. HARDROCK MINERAL LICENSING.**

17 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may grant non-
18 competitive licenses for the exploration and mining of
19 hardrock minerals on the outer Continental Shelf.

20 “(b) ROYALTY RATE.—The royalty rate for hardrock
21 minerals extracted pursuant to a license under subsection
22 (a) shall be a royalty rate determined by the Secretary
23 through regulations issued not more than 2 years after
24 the date of enactment of the Energy Freedom Act, which
25 may include a royalty rate of 0 percent if the Secretary

1 finds that such a royalty rate is necessary to ensure com-
 2 petition.”.

3 **TITLE V—STOPPING EXECUTIVE** 4 **OVERREACH**

5 **SEC. 501. FINDING.**

6 Congress finds that frequent change to major energy
 7 regulations have a detrimental effect on investment in,
 8 and development of, domestic energy production, which re-
 9 duces competition and raises energy prices.

10 **SEC. 502. NAVIGABLE WATERS PROTECTION RULE.**

11 (a) REINSTATEMENT.—The final rule of the Corps
 12 of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency
 13 entitled “The Navigable Waters Protection Rule: Defini-
 14 tion of ‘Waters of the United States’” (85 Fed. Reg.
 15 22250 (April 21, 2020)) is hereby reinstated, and each
 16 of its provisions shall apply unless and until the effective
 17 date of a subsequent final rule promulgated, subject to
 18 subsection (b), under applicable authority that replaces or
 19 repeals that provision.

20 (b) MODIFICATION PROHIBITED.—The Secretary of
 21 the Army and the Administrator of the Environmental
 22 Protection Agency may not modify the final rule described
 23 in subsection (a) during the 15-year period that begins
 24 on the date of enactment of this Act.

1 **SEC. 503. METHANE RULE.**

2 (a) REINSTATEMENT.—Notwithstanding Public Law
3 117–23 (135 Stat. 295), the final rule of the Environ-
4 mental Protection Agency entitled “Oil and Natural Gas
5 Sector: Emission Standards for New, Reconstructed, and
6 Modified Sources Review” (85 Fed. Reg. 57018 (Sep-
7 tember 14, 2020)) is hereby reinstated, and each of its
8 provisions shall apply unless and until the effective date
9 of a subsequent final rule promulgated, subject to sub-
10 section (b), under applicable authority that replaces or re-
11 peals that provision.

12 (b) MODIFICATION PROHIBITED.—The Adminis-
13 trator of the Environmental Protection Agency may not
14 modify the final rule described in subsection (a) during
15 the 15-year period that begins on the date of enactment
16 of this Act.

17 **SEC. 504. ONRR 2020 VALUATION REFORM AND CIVIL PEN-**
18 **ALTY RULE.**

19 (a) REINSTATEMENT.—The final rule of the Office
20 of Natural Resources Revenue of the Department of the
21 Interior entitled “ONRR 2020 Valuation Reform and Civil
22 Penalty Rule” (86 Fed. Reg. 4612 (January 15, 2021))
23 is hereby reinstated, and each of its provisions shall apply
24 unless and until the effective date of a subsequent final
25 rule promulgated, subject to subsection (b), under applica-
26 ble authority that replaces or repeals that provision.

1 (b) MODIFICATION PROHIBITED.—The Secretary and
2 the Director of the Office of Natural Resources Revenue
3 may not modify the final rule described in subsection (a)
4 during the 15-year period that begins on the date of enact-
5 ment of this Act.

6 **SEC. 505. NEPA RULE.**

7 (a) REINSTATEMENT.—The final rule of the Council
8 on Environmental Quality entitled “Update to the Regula-
9 tions Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the Na-
10 tional Environmental Policy Act” (85 Fed. Reg. 43304
11 (July 16, 2020)) is hereby reinstated, and each of its pro-
12 visions shall apply unless and until the effective date of
13 a subsequent final rule promulgated, subject to subsection
14 (b), under applicable authority that replaces or repeals
15 that provision.

16 (b) UPDATES TO IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS.—
17 Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this
18 Act, the Council on Environmental Quality shall revise the
19 implementing regulations of the National Environmental
20 Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) under sub-
21 chapter A of chapter V of title 40, Code of Federal Regu-
22 lations (or successor regulations), in accordance with the
23 final rule described in subsection (a).

24 (c) PROHIBITION.—The Council on Environmental
25 Quality may not modify the final rule described in sub-

1 section (a) during the 15-year period that begins on the
2 date of enactment of this Act.

3 **SEC. 506. NATIONWIDE PERMIT 12.**

4 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Sec-
5 retary of the Army may not modify nationwide permit 12,
6 as described in the final rule of the Secretary of the Army
7 entitled “Reissuance and Modification of Nationwide Per-
8 mits” (86 Fed. Reg. 2744 (January 13, 2021)), during
9 the 15-year period that begins on the date of enactment
10 of this Act.

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