



Committee: House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy & Mineral Resources
Event: [Legislative hearing on H.R. 301, H.R. 398, H.R. 1077, H.R. 1687, H.R. 5576, H.R. 5587, H.R. 5617, H.R. 5631 and H.R. 5638](#)
Date: December 15, 2025

Executive Summary: The hearing focused on nine geothermal related bills before the committee and was marked by a notably bipartisan tone. Members and witnesses broadly agreed that geothermal energy is a reliable, domestic baseload resource and that permitting delays, inconsistent federal processes, and agency capacity constraints, rather than technology, are the primary barriers to deployment. Witnesses emphasized the need for standardized, predictable permitting and parity with oil and gas while maintaining environmental protections. Overall, the discussion reflected strong bipartisan agreement that reforms are needed in order to scale geothermal development in the U.S.

Considered Legislation:

- [H.R. 301](#)-“Geothermal Energy Opportunity Act” or the “GEO Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-UT-02)
- [H.R. 398](#) -“Geothermal Cost-Recovery Authority Act of 2025”
 - Introduced by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY-14)
- [H.R. 1077](#)- “Streamlining Thermal Energy through Advanced Mechanisms Act” or the “STEAM Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV-03)
- [H.R. 1687](#)-“Committing Leases for Energy Access Now Act” or the “CLEAN Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-ID-01)
- [H.R. 5576](#) - “Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Fulcher
- [H.R. 5587](#)-“Harnessing Energy At Thermal Sources Act” or the “HEATS Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Young Kim (R-CA-40)
- [H.R. 5617](#) -“Geothermal Gold Book Development Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Ansari
- [H.R. 5631](#) -“Geothermal Ombudsman for National Deployment and Optimal Reviews Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Jeff Hurd (R-CO-03)
- [H.R. 5638](#) -“Geothermal Royalty Reform Act”
 - Introduced by Rep. Mike Kennedy (R-UT-03)

Member Toplines:

*Subcommittee Chair Pete Stauber (R-MN-08)*¹: Highlighted rising electricity demand and the role geothermal energy could play in meeting future energy needs. He cited federal leasing and permitting barriers, including duplicative requirements and lengthy *National Environmental*

¹ Opening testimony was not available at the time of this memo’s composition.

Policy Act (NEPA) reviews that can extend up to a decade, as key obstacles to deployment. Stauber argued the legislation would streamline permitting on federal lands and help scale geothermal development, expressing support for the bills under consideration.

*Subcommittee Ranking Member Yassamin Ansari (D-AZ-03)*²: Ansari emphasized the bipartisan interest in geothermal energy and its potential to support grid reliability and affordability. She highlighted advances in next-generation geothermal technologies and expressed support for the intent of the legislation considered, while raising concerns about broader federal actions affecting clean energy deployment.

Witness Toplines – Panel I:

*Chair Stauber*³: Stauber spoke in support of H.R. 1687, the CLEAN Act, and H.R. 5576, the Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act. He argued the bills would expand geothermal deployment, noting that a majority of geothermal resources are located on federal lands. Stauber emphasized that reforming the federal leasing and permitting process is essential to unlocking geothermal development.

*Ranking Member Ansari*⁴: Ansari spoke in support of her bill, H.R. 5617, the Geothermal Gold Book Development Act. She highlighted inconsistencies in geothermal leasing and permitting across Bureau of Land Management (BLM) field offices and said the bill would direct the Department of the Interior (DOI) to standardize processes nationwide.

*Rep. Hurd*⁵: Hurd spoke in support of H.R. 5631, the Geothermal Ombudsman for National Deployment and Optimal Reviews Act. He argued that uneven expertise across BLM field offices slows geothermal development and emphasized the need to build agency capacity. Hurd also referenced BLM support for the legislation.

*Rep. Lee*⁶: Lee spoke in support of H.R. 1077, the STEAM Act, emphasizing that next-generation geothermal faces greater regulatory barriers than other energy sources. She highlighted disparities in how geothermal is treated relative to oil and gas and expressed support for the CLEAN Act and the GEO Act, noting that all three measures passed the House last Congress. Lee pointed to Nevada as a leader in geothermal development and a model for the rest of the country.

*Rep. Maloy*⁷: Maloy spoke in support of H.R. 301, the GEO Act, emphasizing that the bill would not bypass environmental review requirements. She referenced a May field hearing in Utah to highlight that geothermal projects face longer permitting timelines than wind, solar, and oil and gas. Maloy also underscored workforce and technical overlaps between oil and gas and geothermal development.

² Opening testimony was not available at the time of this memo's composition.

³ Opening testimony was not available at the time of this memo's composition.

⁴ Opening testimony was not available at the time of this memo's composition.

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Rep. Kennedy: Kennedy spoke in support of H.R. 5638, the Geothermal Royalty Reform Act. He framed geothermal as a reliable, dispatchable baseload resource capable of meeting rising electricity demand and argued that regulatory delays are limiting access to a resource that could strengthen U.S. energy security and affordability.

Witness Toplines – Panel II:

Jon Raby, Nevada State Director, BLM, DOI⁸: Raby discussed BLM's role in supporting geothermal development, emphasizing geothermal energy's reliability as a baseload power source and its contribution to U.S. energy security by reducing reliance on foreign energy sources and supply chains. He referenced the Administration's commitment to geothermal development and stated that the bills under consideration align with its goal of addressing the nation's "energy emergency." Raby said BLM supports the objectives of the proposed legislation, particularly reforms to geothermal leasing and permitting processes that would improve consistency, efficiency, and project timelines across federal lands.

Major Takeaways:

- Rep. **Jeff Crank** (R-CO-05) raised concerns about unequal treatment of geothermal energy compared to oil and gas, particularly regarding access to categorical exclusions (CEs) under NEPA despite similarities between the industries in workforce, tools, and processes. Crank asked whether DOI has conducted a systematic review of existing CEs that could be extended to geothermal development.
 - Raby responded that BLM adopted two categorical exclusions earlier this year from the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Navy but acknowledged that additional opportunities exist. He stated that developing a new categorical exclusion could take approximately 60 to 90 days if directed by Congress.
- Rep. Ansari asked whether DOI has processed any new wind or solar applications in recent months. Raby responded that applications are under review and agreed to provide more detail in a written response. Ansari also referenced a letter from Nevada Gov. **Joe Lombardo** (R) regarding projects pending at DOI and raised concerns about staffing levels.
 - Raby stated that several career employees have left the agency and said BLM is working through staffing and workforce planning.
- Stauber also asked how often exploratory activities contemplated under H.R. 5576 result in a finding of no significant impact, to which Raby responded that 100 percent of the activities contemplated under the bill would be well suited for a CE.
- Reps. Lee, Stauber, and Hurd highlighted inconsistencies in how BLM field offices treat geothermal projects, attributing the issue to uneven geothermal expertise and lack of standardized guidance.
- Full Committee Ranking Member **Jared Huffman** (D-CA-02) raised concerns about BLM staffing constraints and emphasized the need to expedite permitting while maintaining environmental protections. Huffman cautioned that some actions initially covered by CEs could later raise significant environmental concerns, and expressed concern that the bills under consideration lack sufficient language to consider these "extraordinary circumstances".

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Witness Toplines – Panel III:

*Dr. Bryant Jones, Executive Director, Geothermal Rising*⁹: Jones highlighted geothermal’s reliability, scalability, and potential to deliver 60–90 GW of clean, baseload power by 2050, noting it operates at over 90 percent capacity with a minimal land footprint. He argued that permitting delays and inconsistent BLM processes, rather than technology or resources, are the primary barriers to deployment. Jones emphasized the need for standardized, predictable federal permitting to meet rising electricity demand and expressed support for all nine bills as a comprehensive approach to streamlining geothermal development while maintaining environmental protections.

*Tim Latimer, Co-Founder and CEO, Fervo Energy*¹⁰: Latimer highlighted the need for bipartisan permitting reform, referencing his participation in a Utah field hearing last year. He described enhanced geothermal systems (EGS) as scalable and capable of meeting rising electricity demand driven by artificial intelligence and data centers. Latimer emphasized the availability of a domestic oil and gas workforce that can be rapidly retrained for geothermal operations and noted that EGS relies on a largely domestic supply chain. He identified permitting timelines as the industry’s main constraint and expressed support for the full package of geothermal bills before the committee.

*Dr. Kerry Rohrmeier, Nevada Climate and Energy Strategy Director, The Nature Conservancy*¹¹: Rohrmeier described geothermal energy as an important clean energy resource while noting that projects can pose risks to sensitive environments and species if not properly managed. She stated that The Nature Conservancy supports geothermal development alongside strong environmental safeguards and urged Congress to improve agency coordination and expertise, ensure adequate staffing, modernize permitting processes consistent with the mitigation hierarchy, and support public and private geothermal research.

*Paul Thomsen, Vice President of Business Development, Ormat Technologies, Inc.*¹²: Thomsen emphasized geothermal energy’s low environmental impact and highlighted Ormat’s experience permitting projects at a relatively rapid pace. He expressed support for all nine geothermal bills under consideration, with particular emphasis on H.R. 301, the GEO Act, and H.R. 5638, the Geothermal Royalty Reform Act. Thomsen cited real-world examples in which the barriers addressed by these bills constrained Ormat’s ability to advance geothermal projects.

Major Takeaways:

- Stauber raised questions about how state environmental reviews compare to the federal process and whether shifting certain permitting responsibilities to states, as would be directed by the HEATS Act, could reduce timelines.
 - Latimer responded that state agencies often process geothermal applications and lease sales more quickly than federal agencies without weakening

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environmental protections and argued that greater reliance on state processes could improve project timelines.

- Rep. **Seth Magaziner** (D-RI-02) asked what would be required to deploy and scale EGS nationwide. Latimer emphasized that EGS must first be deployed in areas where it is currently viable and that removing permitting barriers now is essential to enabling broader national expansion.
- Magaziner asked about the use of geothermal energy in densely populated areas. Latimer responded that geothermal requires minimal ground disturbance, making it well suited for urban and high-density settings. Rohrmeier added that geothermal is a mature technology with well-understood environmental impacts and pointed to Reno, Nevada, as an example of successful deployment in a densely populated area.
- Fulcher questioned whether the geothermal supply chain could scale to meet growing demand. Jones responded that geothermal is a domestic energy resource supported by a U.S.-based supply chain, with energy produced entirely within the United States.
- Fulcher also asked whether international geothermal models could inform U.S. deployment. Latimer cited Japan, Kenya, Iceland, New Zealand, and others as leaders in geothermal development, while emphasizing that the United States has a comparative advantage due to its skilled workforce and drilling innovations derived from the oil and gas sector.