

# End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act

## **Nevada Conservation League**

“Speculative oil and gas leasing is a bad deal for Nevada. For too long, industry has taken advantage of the antiquated oil and gas leasing system. Companies have bought up public lands with little to no development potential, locking up lands and siphoning the public’s resources. We support Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee's efforts to advance a bill that would put an end to this wasteful practice and enhance the management of more sustainable revenue-generating activities on our public lands like hunting, fishing, tourism, and outdoor recreation. This bill is an urgently needed solution to a problem that has plagued our public lands, taxpayers, and local economies for years. When passed, this bill will play an essential part in ensuring the protection of our public spaces and complements our nation’s leadership in clean energy generation” **said Angelyn Tabalba, Communications Director at Nevada Conservation League and Education Fund.**

## **Nevada Wildlife Federation**

“There is no reason why oil and gas companies should dictate how our public lands are managed, especially when those lands have no potential for oil and gas development,” **said Russell Kuhlman, executive director of the Nevada Wildlife Federation.** “Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee’s bill is a long overdue fix that would put an end to the harmful practice of speculative leasing and modernize our leasing system so that it works once again for the communities and wildlife who depend on our nation’s public lands.”

## **National Wildlife Federation**

“This is common sense legislation is long overdue. For too long, energy speculators have taken advantage of an outdated leasing system that allowed them to scoop up leases for ridiculously low prices on land with virtually no potential to produce oil and gas,” **said Bailey Brennan, public lands attorney at the National Wildlife Federation.** “Speculative leasing on low potential lands wastes government time and money that could be better spent on managing our public lands for other purposes, including conservation and recreation. We applaud Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee for protecting the public interest on our public lands.”

## **The Wilderness Society**

“It’s past time we stop giving handouts and first dibs to oil and gas companies on public lands. This bill will help rein in companies who are hoarding millions of acres of public lands that could instead support things like climate resilience, conservation, responsibly deploying renewable energy, or the nearly \$900 billion outdoor recreation industry that’s helping local economies across the West,” **said Justin Meuse, Government Relations Director at The Wilderness Society.** “We’re counting on Congress to pass this bill to start adding some fairness and balance into the way BLM manages public lands – helping ensure they benefit all people, not just oil and gas CEOs.”

## **Western Organization of Resource Councils**

"WORC and thousands of western community members applaud Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee for re-introducing the End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act. Our public lands and minerals, which belong to all of us, should be protected and conserved at all cost. Eliminating low- and no-potential oil/gas leasing allows the Bureau of Land Management to prioritize these public lands for other values like wildlife habitat and recreation. And it's important to recognize that this bill won't impact oil and gas developers because of the very small likelihood of these areas being economically viable," **said Barbara Vasquez, Oil and Gas Chair at Western Organization of Resource Councils.**

## **Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship**

“It shouldn’t matter which side of the aisle this common-sense, conservative legislation originates from, it is long overdue and essential for the responsible stewardship of America’s public lands. We should not be wasting our already stretched taxpayer dollars holding lease sales on land that has a zero chance to produce economical amounts of oil or gas,” **said David Jenkins, President of Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship.**

“Leasing public lands in places like Nevada, a state that is geologically bereft of oil or gas, is not only a waste of resources, it comes at the expense of other land uses, the Western economy, and the multiple use principles that have guided American land management for more than a century,” **Jenkins added.**

“If enacted, this legislation will restore much-needed balance and rationality to our public land management decisions. It will help ensure that the lands we do lease can actually provide a fair return to the American taxpayer,” **Jenkins said.**

## **Public Land Solutions**

“Public land communities are prospering from growth in remote work opportunities and demand for outdoor access, but antiquated laws that allow speculative oil and gas leasing on low and no potential lands are tying up places better used for trails. Recreation assets on public lands have the power to attract both visitors and business investment to the places that need them the most. The End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act will update our public land system and free up BLM staff to meet local community demand for outdoor access, instead of leasing lands that are unlikely to ever be developed. We are grateful for Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Susie Lee’s leadership and attention to this important issue, and the Biden administration should follow suit and advance a rule to reform the federal oil and gas leasing system as soon as possible,” **said Ashley Korenblat, Managing Director of Public Land Solutions.**

## **Trout Unlimited**

Trout Unlimited supports legislation introduced today in both Houses of Congress by Senator Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Representative Susie Lee (D-NV3) that would improve the federal oil and gas leasing program on public lands. The End Speculative Oil and Gas Leasing Act would require Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to regularly assess oil and gas development potential on public lands managed by the BLM and Forest Service, and it would prohibit BLM from offering leases on lands determined to have little to no development or production potential.

“Trout Unlimited has long advocated for responsible energy development that is balanced with other multiple uses, such as recreation and fish and wildlife conservation,” **said Pam Harrington, Nevada field manager for Trout Unlimited.** “However, in places like Nevada’s Ruby Mountains, the potential for energy development is low and the risk is extremely high for degrading fish and wildlife and world class hunting and angling opportunities.”

[Fifty-five percent of federal oil and gas leases](#) sold since 2012 are on lands with little to no potential for oil and gas development and production. This includes more than 105,000 acres of leases along the southern portion of the Ruby Mountains on lands with low or no potential for oil and gas development.

“The current system does not benefit American taxpayers and creates unnecessary land management conflicts with fish, wildlife, outdoor recreation and other multiple-use activities,” continued Harrington. “State and federal agencies are also burdened with having to review dubious leasing proposals, diverting limited resources that otherwise would be devoted to other priorities such as managing fish and wildlife habitat. It’s a wasteful, outdated process and we thank Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee for helping to end oil and gas speculation on our public lands.”

## **Hispanic Access Foundation**

“We have a moral obligation to protect our nation’s iconic public lands for future generations so that they, too, can enjoy the same recreational and cultural opportunities that we have today. Senator Cortez Masto’s bill and Representative Susie Lee’s companion bill to prohibit the leasing of lands that have low or no drilling potential is a strong first step toward ensuring that we protect our public lands for the benefit of local economies, public health, access to the outdoors, and our shared history and culture. We urge Congress to pass this legislation. The Biden administration must also take action to advance promised reforms to our federal oil and gas leasing system that will further safeguard our public lands and the communities that depend on them,” **said Maite Arce, President & CEO of Hispanic Access Foundation.**

## **Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting and the Outdoors (HECHO)**

“Speculative leasing is a destructive practice that allows oil and gas companies to tie up public lands with little to no potential for development in long-term leases. Speculative leasing not only wastes important government resources, but it also hinders public access to the great outdoors, threatens cultural landmarks, and puts critical wildlife habitats in harm's way,” **said Camilla Simon, executive director of Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hunting and the Outdoors (HECHO).** “Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee’s bill will finally put an end to speculative leasing and put public lands back into the hands of the people.”

## **Vet Voice Foundation**

“America’s public lands play a critical role in veterans’ transition back to civilian life. But for too long, the misguided practice of speculative leasing has allowed oil and gas companies to obtain public lands with little to no drilling potential, and obstruct public access to outdoor recreation opportunities and harm sensitive wildlife. Fortunately, Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee have reintroduced common-sense legislation that would end this wasteful practice, reduce impacts to public lands and wildlife, and create greater opportunities for conservation and clean energy jobs. This bill is a critical step toward keeping the iconic lands we fought for protected for future generations,” **said Janessa Goldbeck, CEO of Vet Voice Foundation.**

## **Montana Wildlife Federation**

“We’re thankful for Senator Catherine Cortez Masto and Representative Susie Lee’s leadership on legislation that would put an end to wasteful speculative leasing on our public lands. For too long, oil and gas corporations have leased millions of acres of lands with little to no drilling potential at the expense of wildlife and habitat. This bill would re-prioritize public land uses that protect habitat and create outdoor recreation opportunities. The Department of the Interior should follow Senator Cortez Masto and Representative Lee’s lead and move forward with a rulemaking to reform the federal oil and gas leasing system and further protect our public lands,” **said Ilona Wilde, Acting Federal Policy Director at the Montana Wildlife Federation.**