



**WESTERN RESOURCE**  
**ADVOCATES**

For Immediate Release

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Oil Shale Rules in Proposed Energy Bill Heading the Wrong Way

In response to language inserted into the US House of Representative's *Comprehensive American Energy Security and Taxpayer Protection Act* (H.R. 6899) regarding oil shale leasing regulations, Western Resource Advocates executive director, Karin Sheldon, releases the following statement:

“Efforts to take a wise course of action on the proper development of oil shale took a giant step backwards with the inclusion of language in the House’s comprehensive energy bill that opens up 2 million acres of federal lands for commercial oil shale leasing. Succumbing to strong political pressure, this bill paves the way for prematurely selling oil shale leases before there is an oil shale industry capable of commercially developing this resource. It makes no sense to finalize commercial leasing rules until industry figures out how to commercially produce oil shale. We’re still a long way from that happening.

“Oil shale companies currently have test leases on federal oil shale lands where they can work on solving the vexing problems this resource presents. It’s not Congress that has been impeding forward progress on developing oil shale, it’s the stubborn shale itself. Consequently, Western Resource Advocates cannot support the oil shale provisions in this bill.”

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**Facts on HR 6899:**

- The bill repeals the restriction on the Department of the Interior from issuing leasing regulations that Congress enacted in December 2007. The limitation was intended to give industry time to develop the technologies needed to commercially develop oil shale before the federal government issued regulations.
- The bill charges individual states with passing laws in support of oil shale leasing prior to the federal government commencing lease sale on federal lands.
- The Department of the Interior can still proceed with the environmental analyses regardless of state approval.

### **Facts on Oil Shale:**

- “Chevron believes that a full scale commercial leasing program should not proceed at this time without clear demonstration of commercial technologies.”  
-- Chevron Oil
- Shell Oil, the company furthest along in development of experimental extraction technologies, admits it is at least a decade off from knowing whether its technologies are commercially viable and at least 2025 before any commercial production could begin.
- “Currently, there is no oil shale industry and the oil shale extractive technology is still in its rudimentary stages; as such, commercial oil shale production does not exist anywhere in the world” – Bureau of Land Management, from the draft leasing rules
- “The lack of a domestic oil shale industry makes it speculative to project the demand for oil shale leases, the technical capability to develop the resource, and the economics of producing shale oil.” – Bureau of Land Management, from the draft leasing rules
- “Because the oil shale industry is still in the research and development phase, it would be speculative to predict whether the industry as it matures would predominantly sell from its leases mined solid oil shale, shale oil, synthetic petroleum, shale gas, natural gas, or products in several different forms or stages of processing. “ – Bureau of Land Management, from the draft leasing rules

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*Western Resource Advocates is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to protecting the West's land, air, and water. For more information, please visit [www.westernresourceadvocates.org](http://www.westernresourceadvocates.org)*