



**NATURAL
RESOURCES**
COMMITTEE DEMOCRATS
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Grijalva, 16 Democrats Introduce Comprehensive Energy Reform Legislation to Increase Taxpayer Benefits, Promote Conservation

Washington, D.C. – As House Republicans continue to promote enormous oil and gas industry giveaways as their vision for energy policy, and as Senate Republicans move to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling as part of an unrelated tax bill, Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) laid out a smarter way forward by introducing [the Sustainable Energy Development Reform Act](#) (SEDRA) today with 16 House Democratic cosponsors. The bill protects the Arctic Refuge, allows energy development to co-exist with rather than dominate other uses of federal lands, and ensures a fairer return for taxpayers for the extraction of resources on public property.

The bill reforms the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, enacting long overdue improvements for environmental protection and drilling safety – which should have been made in the aftermath of the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster – that Congressional Republicans have willfully avoided. It protects the health of people living near fossil fuel operations by restricting the amount of methane that can be leaked into the air and the amount of coal mine waste that can be dumped into streams.

The bill encourages renewable energy development instead of just paying lip service to the need for clean fuels. It also amends the Mineral Leasing Act to treat popular and sensitive natural landscapes as a resource in their own right, to be managed carefully and protectively, not simply as a cash cow to be exploited or dominated for unsustainable short-term profits.

Negotiations between the House and Senate on comprehensive energy legislation went nowhere at the end of the last Congress, partially because Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) demanded an end to the popular Land and Water Conservation Fund and other unreasonable measures as the price of collaboration. This year's equally extreme House Republican efforts have shown no sign of advancing any further than last year's attempts. The Republican SECURE American Energy Act, recently approved along party lines in the House Natural Resources Committee, is little more than a pro-industry "drill, baby, drill" wish list.

“The Trump administration and Republicans in Congress are openly ripping up our environmental laws to help oil, gas and coal interests make a quick buck,” **Grijalva said today**. “Republicans need to understand that their demands are not popular and will not become law if they keep putting polluter industries ahead of taxpayer interests. The Democratic way forward through SEDRA is cleaner energy, more returns to taxpayers, an end to industry giveaways and less pollution in the air we breathe and the water we drink. We look forward to Republicans kicking the dirty energy habit and joining us in passing a serious bill.”

“As the Trump administration works to keep America addicted to the fossil fuels of the past, it is encouraging to see congressional leaders like Rep. Grijalva looking forward with legislation that would promote clean, renewable energy and protect our public lands and waters from the threats of reckless oil and gas development,” **said Athan Manuel, Director of the Sierra Club's Lands Protection Program**. “America's public lands belong to all of us. Congress must act to ensure that they are managed responsibly and protected for future generations, not sold off to the fossil fuel industry.”

“At a time when the Trump administration appears willing to stop at nothing - even the law - to open up our public lands and waters to fossil fuel development and roll back important safeguards that protect our air and water, the Sustainable Energy Development Reform Act points our nation in the right direction,” **said Marissa Knodel, Associate Legislative Counsel at Earthjustice**. “This bill ensures that clean air and water and public health and safety are prioritized over the profits of for the fossil fuel industry. It also incentivizes renewable sources of energy over fossil fuels and recognizes that some areas, like the Coastal Plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, are too special to drill.”

“The Sustainable Energy Development Reform Act would permanently protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Arctic Ocean from oil and gas development, which is critical to addressing climate change and an Arctic that is warming at twice the rate as the rest of the planet,” **said Leah Donahey, Senior Campaign Director at the Alaska Wilderness League**. “This drill-everywhere Congress and the drilling-everything Trump administration are basically sacrificing America’s Arctic in order to please their donors and the oil and gas industry. We cannot do this to our children and grandchildren.”

“Congress must consider energy production on public lands with future generations in mind. That’s why we support the Sustainable Energy Development Reform Act (SEDRA),” **said Chase Huntley, Energy and Climate Program Director for The Wilderness Society**. “It delivers apt solutions to decades-old flaws in the federal energy leasing system that shortchange taxpayers, reward waste and prevent public input, and encourages the renewable energy essential for addressing climate change.”

A full section-by-section analysis of the bill is available online at <http://bit.ly/2A1G762>. Among other measures, the bill:

- **Comprehensively reforms onshore and offshore oil and gas leasing and permitting** to improve financial returns to American taxpayers, protect the environment and other uses of public lands, increase industry transparency, discourage speculation, and codify Obama administration reforms.

- **Closes loopholes that oil and gas companies take advantage of in environmental laws**, such as the Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Water Act, and Clean Air Act, and enacts strong fracking and methane waste standards.
- **Reforms the federal coal leasing program**, reinstates a strong stream protection rule, protects residents living near coal mines from blasting, and directs additional money to abandoned mine reclamation.
- **Ensures taxpayers get a fair return** by updating royalty rates for oil, gas, and coal extracted from public lands and increases outdated rental fees, bonding levels, minimum bids, and penalties.
- **Encourages the development of renewable energy** onshore and offshore.
- **Improves climate change planning** by requiring the federal government to consider the social costs of carbon and methane in planning potential major decisions and by developing climate change adaptation strategies to increase resilience.
- **Permanently protects the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the Arctic Ocean** from oil and gas development.
- **Permanently authorizes and fully funds the Land and Water Conservation Fund** and creates a new fund to help protect, maintain, and restore coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes ecosystems.

The bill is cosponsored by Reps. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.), Don Beyer, Jr. (D-Va.), Darren Soto (D-Fla.), Grace Napolitano (D-Calif.), Niki Tsongas (D-Mass.), Jimmy Gomez (D-Calif.), Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam), Gerald Connolly (D-Va.), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), Nanette Barragán (D-Calif.), Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), Donald McEachin (D-Va.), Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.), Janice Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and Jared Polis (D-Colo.).

The bill is endorsed by the Alaska Wilderness League, Appalachian Voices, Earthjustice, the League of Conservation Voters, Sierra Club, Western Organization of Resource Councils and The Wilderness Society.

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