

S 2229 - Wyoming Range Legacy Act
Protects Wyoming's Namesake Mountains & Enjoys Diverse Bipartisan Support
Impact to future oil and gas resources—insignificant

Wyoming Range Legacy Act components--

- Withdraws 1.2 million acres of Bridger-Teton National Forest lands from future mineral leasing
- Does not include current producing gas fields on Forest; does not affect current valid oil and gas leases on Forest – approximately 75,000 acres
- Allows for directional drilling and access to oil & gas under withdrawal area from current producing fields
- If leases are retired or expire, area is not available for future leasing
- Recent WY Geologic Survey analysis* shows only 1.1 tcf natural gas—far less than BLM estimate

Would the bill impact valid, undeveloped leases and those lease rights?

No. The bill respects valid lease rights within the withdrawal boundary. But willing lease holders could retire or donate their leases back to the federal government knowing that the leases would be permanently retired. Private funding would be used to buy out and retire leases from willing sellers.

Has this sort of legislative approach happened before?

Yes. This legislation is similar to a bipartisan law passed in 2006 that protects the Rocky Mountain Front in Montana. Similar legislation also passed for the Valle Vidal area in northern New Mexico.

Does the Wyoming Range Legacy Act enjoy broad support?

Yes! A wide variety of Wyomingites have mobilized to protect the Wyoming Range, including both Republican Senators---Sen. John Barrasso and Sen. Mike Enzie, as well as Governor Dave Freudenthal, a Democrat, the Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association, Wyoming AFL-CIO, Wyoming State Tourism Board, state legislators, local landowners, ranchers, hunters & fishermen, business owners and chambers of commerce.

Would the legislation impact domestic energy production?

No. Energy resources beneath the withdrawal area are a drop in the bucket and because most of the resource falls under current valid leases (75,000 acres)—access to this resource will remain even after passage of the legislation. But these resources are small compared to Wyoming's booming production elsewhere. The nearby Jonah and Pinedale Anticline fields contain approximately 37 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas resource, whereas the Wyoming State Geologic Survey estimates the Wyoming Range withdrawal area has less than 1.1 tcf of technically recoverable resource. In one year alone, these two fields produce as much natural gas as could ever be economically recovered from the entire withdrawal boundary of the Wyoming Range.

Why has there been some debate about the resource in the Wyoming Range?

Citing an old report that used outdated (1995) US Geologic Survey (USGS) data, the Bureau of Land Management presented a higher estimate of the technically recoverable oil and gas resource under the Range. The BLM ignored its own Energy Policy and Conservation Act

(EPCA) II Report published in 2006 that used updated USGS geological data. (New assessments were completed in 2002 - 2005 as mandated by Congress in EPCA). The recent Wyoming State Geological Survey analysis also utilized this newer data. The best USGS geologic science now tells us that the Wyoming Range resource is only 12% of the original BLM figure.

Why was the BLM estimate so off?

They used an old report based on outdated 1995 USGS assessments. Since 1995, the Geologic Survey has revised its estimates, particularly for the Wyoming Thrust Belt Province. In 1995, the mean estimate of natural gas in the Wyoming Thrust Belt Province was 12 tcf, but the USGS lowered that estimate to only .92 tcf in 2003.

Wyoming Range Legacy Act ensures balance in Wyoming and keeps our economy diversified. It

- has strong, diverse, statewide bipartisan support
- protects valuable wildlife habitat, recreational areas for families, hunting & fishing opportunities, watersheds and traditional businesses (ranching, outfitting, tourism)
- does not impact future energy supplies—resource amount is small and most is currently accessible & will remain so, due to 75,000 acres of valid leases & additional directional drilling from producing leases
- protects our western way of life, outdoor heritage and a national natural treasure—assets for the future

**Wyoming is already doing its fair share of providing energy.
We are the btu capitol of the nation.**

**Where can I get more information? Visit www.wyomingrange.org
Citizens Protecting the Wyoming Range**

* June 3, 2008 letter from Governor Dave Freudenthal to US Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, available at <http://governor.wy.gov/Media.aspx?MediaId=522>