



ENHANCING GEOTHERMAL PRODUCTION ON FEDERAL LANDS (H.R. 5576)

Date Introduced: September 26, 2025

WHAT:

H.R. 5576 – To amend the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to promote timely exploration for geothermal resources under geothermal leases and for other purposes.

This bill directs the Secretary of Interior to designate geothermal leasing priority areas on federal lands in consultation with the Secretary of Energy. Priority lands are “preferable for geothermal leasing,” economically viable, accessible to transmission, and compliant with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

This legislation streamlines permitting requirements prior to geothermal leasing in two meaningful ways by determining that geothermal exploration projects and activities related to those projects do not constitute a “major federal action” for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Second, the bill also directs the Secretary to prepare a supplement to any final programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) on geothermal leasing priority areas. The legislation directs the Secretary to rely on programmatic environmental reviews, rather than individual assessments for each parcel. If the Secretary deems sufficient preexisting environmental assessments exist in the preceding 10-year period (post-PEIS) then no additional NEPA analysis would be required.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Geothermal energy production has the potential to dramatically increase across the U.S. Uniquely positioned to meet the rising energy demands, geothermal energy offers firm, dispatchable, and clean energy. Analysis from the Department of Energy projects upwards of 90 GW of geothermal electricity-generating capacity by 2050, up from 3.7 GW today.

90% of discoverable geothermal resources are currently located on federal lands. The current NEPA structure requires federal agencies to determine the environmental impact of proposed actions, with the average review of 4.5 years. Geothermal is subject to uniquely cumbersome reviews, sometimes requiring up to six distinct reviews from leasing to operation. Despite employing many of the same drilling tactics as oil and gas, geothermal energy was not provided the same Categorical Exclusions under the Energy Act of 2005.

Strengthening permitting efficiencies for geothermal exploration and operational activities has the potential to further de-risk projects, accelerating exploration and development timelines. H.R. 5576 begins to mitigate permitting delays associated with geothermal energy exploration through clarification of what should be considered a “major Federal action,” as well as requirements for geothermal leasing priority areas, and guidance on NEPA compliance.

WHAT’S NEXT:

H.R. 5576 amends the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to streamline the permitting process for geothermal energy production on federal lands.

Removing bureaucratic roadblocks would help catalyze the deployment of geothermal energy across the country, providing a unique source of baseload clean energy.

If enacted, H.R. 5576 streamlines permitting and federal reviews, mitigates cost and reduces timelines associated with geothermal energy exploration.

ORIGINAL SPONSOR:

Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-ID)

CO-SPONSORS:

SUPPORT:

CLEARPATH ACTION

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[H.R. 5576](#)