

Business, Environmental, Veterans' Groups Laud Udall and Grassley's Fair Returns for Public Lands Act of 2020 as Commonsense Solution to Update 100-year-old Oil and Gas Leasing Law

Bill modernizes the public lands leasing system since royalty rates were set a century ago in 1920

“Oil and gas companies should not be allowed to lease New Mexico’s breathtaking public lands, which provide habitat for critical wildlife, for pennies on the dollar. Senator Udall’s new bipartisan legislation will put an end to this practice by updating the federal onshore oil and gas leasing system to ensure that our state’s long heritage of fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreation will remain for generations to come.”

— *Jesse Deubel, Executive Director, New Mexico Wildlife Federation*

“Thank you to Senators Udall and Grassley for their leadership addressing century old policies that have cost taxpayers billions of dollars. States charge higher rates to drill on state lands and the federal government charges higher rates to drill offshore. It's time our nation's archaic policies caught up to the real world and stop short-changing taxpayers,”

— *Steve Ellis, president of Taxpayers for Common Sense*

“For decades, the public lands and treasured places that are the bedrock of New Mexico’s outdoor heritage have been leased to oil and gas companies for next to nothing. We are grateful for Senator Udall’s leadership on this bipartisan legislation that would help put an end to this outdated system and help generate critical revenue for schools and infrastructure projects instead of favoring special interests.”

— *Mark Allison, Executive Director, New Mexico Wild*

“The common sense and fiscally conservative reforms contained in this bi-partisan legislation are long overdue. If enacted, the bill will provide a fairer return to taxpayers for publicly owned oil and gas, increase revenue to affected states, and encourage more responsible leasing practices,”

— *David Jenkins, president of Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship*

“Rampant oil and gas leasing is threatening the health of the public and fueling climate change. We need congress to pass common sense bipartisan reforms that update a broken leasing system and prioritizes the wellbeing of the public and the environment. We applaud Senator Udall and Senator Grassley for their continued leadership championing our nation’s public lands.”

— *Jamie Williams, President, The Wilderness Society*

“Our veterans rely on America’s public lands to facilitate their transition back to civilian life, yet our current policies for federal onshore oil and gas development have been undermining the value of these irreplaceable landscapes for decades. Thankfully, Senator Udall and Senator Grassley’s legislation will help put an end to this outdated leasing system so that American’s interests are put ahead of oil and gas companies’.”

— *Kate Hoyt, Western States Director, Vet Voice Foundation*

“For decades, western communities have lost out on billions of dollars and watched as our cherished landscapes deteriorated thanks to federal leasing policies that have not been updated in nearly a century. With the introduction of this legislation today, Senator Udall and Senator Grassley are standing up to ensure that communities like ours are getting a fair return from oil and gas drilling on public lands.”

— *Gwen Lachelt, Founder and Director, Western Leaders Network*

“Our public lands are the economic engine of the West’s \$887 billion-dollar outdoor recreation economy, yet for decades the Bureau of Land Management’s federal onshore oil and gas leasing system has allowed oil and gas companies to lease and drill our public lands for pennies on the dollar. Senator Udall and Senator Grassley’s bill tackles this problem head on to make sure that companies who want to develop our public lands are paying a fair price for these resources.”

— *Susan Mason, Founder and Managing Partner of Aligned Partners, Founding Member of the Conservation for Economic Growth Coalition*

“For too long, America’s public lands have been leased to oil and gas companies for cut-rate prices. And some of these leases occur on the doorstep of our iconic national parks and monuments. Senator Udall and Senator Grassley’s new legislation would update the federal onshore fiscal leasing and drilling policies, which are woefully outdated, to require that oil and gas companies pay their fair share for leasing and developing our precious natural resources.”

— *Phil Francis, Chair, Coalition to Protect America's National Parks*

“This is a desperately needed reform to our outdated federal onshore program’s fiscal policies. We are in a climate crisis and must prioritize a transition to renewable energy as quickly as possible. We cannot afford to keep incentivizing extractive activities on public lands through fossil fuel subsidies and subpar royalty and bonding rates. Thank you, Senator Udall, for standing up against the extractive industry for and demanding fair returns for the use of our public lands.”

— *Laura Forero, Legislative Representative, League of Conservation Voters*

“Under the current and flawed system, millions of acres of land across the west, including those near priceless treasures like Grand Teton and Arches National Park, have been offered to oil developers for pennies on the dollar. This legislation is an incredible step toward dissuading fossil fuel development near some of our most special places, and gets companies closer to paying their fair share to use our public lands for extraction.”

— *Ani Kame'enui, Deputy Vice President, Government Affairs for the National Parks Conservation Association*

“The leasing of our public lands for oil and gas extraction should not be a one-sided proposition—the public’s interest has to be served too. But the current system is little more than a giveaway to a polluting industry. This bill helps to balance the scales, providing some equity to taxpayers for taking public resources.”

— *Sharon Buccino, Director of Lands, Natural Resources Defense Council*

“The Trump administration's reckless fire sale of our public lands puts our communities and climate at risk at American taxpayers' expense. We applaud Senator Udall for his leadership in ensuring that corporate polluters are required to pay their fair share.”

— *Lena Moffitt, Senior Director- Our Wild American Campaign, Sierra Club*

“Our public lands must be part of the solution to the climate crisis, not abused by industry to make it worse. Senator Udall's bill is an obvious right step right now, and it should be an easy one.”

— *Aaron Mintzes, Senior Policy Counsel, Earthworks*

*The following organizations support the Fair Returns for Public Lands Act of
2020*

Climate Advocates Voces Unidas (CAVU)
Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
Conservation for Economic Growth Coalition
Earthworks
Environment Texas
Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peak
Friends of the Earth
League of Conservation Voters
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
National Wildlife Federation
Nevada Wildlife Federation
New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light
New Mexico Voices for Children
New Mexico Wild
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
ProgressNow New Mexico
Sierra Club
Southwest Environmental Center
Taxpayers for Common Sense
The Wilderness Society
Vet Voices Foundation
Western Leaders Network
Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)