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## **Public Engagement Opportunity on Public Land Exploration (PEOPLE) Act**

In the West, prioritizing energy development above all other uses of public land comes at the expense of our air, water, and wildlife. While county commissioners, local elected leaders, and the American people rightfully want to participate in public lands management decisions, the Trump Administration eliminated avenues for public input and participation. These changes reduced confidence in the leasing process and created conflict and litigation. The PEOPLE Act would reverse this trend, restore balance to land management, and safeguard the public's vital role in shaping oil and gas leasing decisions on our public lands.

### The PEOPLE Act would:

**Increase Transparency for Lease Nominations and Bids**, by requiring agencies to directly notify public land user groups (recreation groups, grazing, water interests, outfitters and guides, etc.), surface owners, and local governments of upcoming actions while also publishing this information online. It would also ensure that the general public can see who is nominating parcels for lease sales and who is bidding on these parcels.

**Establish Straightforward Notice and Public Comment Periods**, by requiring at least 90-day notice prior to lease sales and 30-day notice prior to approving applications to drill, lease modifications, or changes to lease stipulations. Under the bill, lease sales would require a minimum 30-day scoping period, a minimum 30-day public notice and comment period for environmental determinations, and at least a 45-day protest period.

**Improve Coordination with Local Governments and Other Federal Agencies**, by ensuring that local governments near lands proposed for lease are provided, at a minimum, the opportunity for public notice and comment as described above. Under the bill, prior to a lease sale, the Department of the Interior must also obtain consent from federal agencies who manage the surface estate (for example, the U.S. Forest Service when leasing occurs in a National Forest).

**Respect Tribal Voices**, by providing notice to the Indian Tribes with a connection to the land involved in the lease sale and the opportunity to comment on the sale and initiate a formal consultation process prior to taking any action.

**Minimize Conflict in Split-Estates**, by requiring operators to try to reach a formal agreement with surface estate owners prior to exploration and drilling activities. Under the bill, operators must inform surface owners of future exploration and drilling plans and provide surface owners with financial assurances if surface resources are damaged.