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August 19, 2019

The Honorable Raul Grijalva  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
House of Representatives  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
House of Representatives  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Conaway  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
House of Representatives  
1010 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva, Chairman Peterson, Ranking Member Bishop, and Ranking Member Conaway:

The West is rich in solar, wind, and geothermal energy resources – many of which are located on federal lands. Western Governors support legislation that promotes responsible development of these resources and ensures states and counties are compensated for the use of local infrastructure and other services that support these projects. Western Governors urge your Committees to expedite consideration of [H.R. 3794](#), the Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Act of 2019. The Governors have submitted letters in support of this bipartisan legislation in the last three Congresses ([May 11, 2017 letter](#); [February 2, 2016 letter](#); and [March 26, 2013 letter](#)) and strongly support H.R. 3794.

Western Governors support: an all-of-the-above energy portfolio, including geothermal, solar, and wind energy; clear, efficient, transparent, and coordinated energy regulation and permitting; and energy policy that advances economic growth and protects the environment. Several elements of H.R. 3794 align with these policy goals, including identification of priority areas and targets for renewable energy production on federal lands, authorization of the use of programmatic and supplemental National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis, and establishment of permit coordination offices. Western Governors appreciate the bill's inclusion of Governors as potential signatories to intergovernmental agreements for expediting NEPA analysis and its requirement for the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to coordinate with states on supplemental NEPA analysis.

Furthermore, the bill assures that the federal government provides states and counties with the resources necessary to offset the loss of tax revenue and local environmental and other impacts from renewable development on certain public lands within their borders (See WGA Policy Resolution [2017-02](#), *States' Share of Royalties and Leasing Revenues from Federal Lands and Minerals and States' Role in Associated Federal Policy*). Western Governors also support the bill's reservation of a portion of revenues for permit processing by state agencies, as well as state protection and restoration of wildlife, habitat, and recreational access. This strikes the appropriate balance of safeguarding community infrastructure, natural resources, and other uses of public lands, while realizing the jobs, economic growth, and resources provided by energy development.


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We encourage Congress to consider including National Forest lands and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as part of the bill's revenue-sharing, NEPA, and permit requirements. Currently, H.R. 3794 requires USDA to meet the renewable energy production targets but does not require the Department to designate priority areas or establish permit coordination offices. In addition, National Forest lands are not encompassed within the definition of covered land; therefore, renewable energy projects on those lands would not be subject to the bill's NEPA provisions and would not contribute to the funds to compensate states and counties for renewable energy development within their borders. A previous version of this bill ([S. 1407](#)) included National Forest lands in the definition of covered lands. The exclusion of these lands in H.R. 3794 represents a missed opportunity.

Western Governors support H.R. 3794's facilitation of the responsible and efficient development of the West's solar, wind, and geothermal resources on federal lands and compensation to states and counties affected by that development. Please contact Western Governors if we can be of assistance in facilitating its enactment.

Sincerely,

  
Doug Burgum  
Governor of North Dakota  
Chair, WGA

  
Kate Brown  
Governor of Oregon  
Vice Chair, WGA

cc: The Honorable Alan Lowenthal, Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources  
The Honorable Paul Gosar, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources