



NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION®
Inspiring Americans to protect wildlife for our children's future.

September 16, 2008

Dear Representative:

The public, including National Wildlife Federation's four million members and supporters, wants Congress to take the urgent and necessary steps that will give consumers better energy choices, cut oil dependency and cut global warming pollution. While we favor many provisions in the *Comprehensive American Energy Security and Taxpayer Protection Act* (H.R. 6899), especially when compared to the expected motion to recommit, we oppose the bill because of its provision allowing commercial oil shale leasing. As a result of this provision, the bill fails to address the fundamental challenge of avoiding significant new increases in global warming pollution and protecting important wildlife habitat on our public lands.

The *Comprehensive American Energy Security and Taxpayer Protection Act* does include several important provisions that would advance clean energy solutions and reduce global warming pollution, including the Renewable Electricity Standard (RES), tax incentives for conservation and renewable energy, cuts in subsidies and giveaways for big oil, and building codes that would increase efficiency in our home and offices. Unfortunately, HR 6899 also affirmatively lifts and does not extend a longstanding moratorium on commercial oil shale leasing putting at risk millions of acres of wildlife habitat throughout the Rocky Mountain West important to hunters, anglers and other wildlife enthusiasts. Moreover, commercial oil shale leasing could lead to dramatic increases in global warming pollution that far out weigh the good provisions in this bill.

Oil shale production is five times more CO₂ intensive than conventional drilling and gasoline production. The United States cannot change course on its rising global warming pollution levels while quintupling the CO₂ in our tanks.

A viable shale industry would also have significant direct impacts on wildlife, and inevitably collide with consumer water needs in the arid West. Shale production requires five gallons of water to produce one gallon of fuel, and the vast majority of shale is located in arid states with limited water resources. The federal government reports that a viable shale industry would consume upwards of 315 million gallons of water daily. Combined with the massive disturbance of land and habitat caused by shale extraction, this fuel presents a grave risk to sensitive wildlife habitat in the Rocky Mountain West.

Most of America's oil shale is found in Green River Formation which is home to some of the most valuable wildlife habitat in the United States. The area supports an impressive array of wildlife, from mule deer and elk to mountain lions, bald eagles, sage grouse, and native trout fisheries. It also provides drinking water to local communities. Millions of Americans, including sportsmen and women, enjoy our public lands for recreational, commercial, or professional activities related to fish and wildlife that would be threatened by oil shale development.

National Wildlife Federation also strongly opposes and urges you to vote against an expected motion to recommit which is anticipated to include expensive subsidies for coal to liquids and no restrictions on oil shale leasing, in addition to drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge and other national treasures. According to the Bush Administration's own Department of Energy expanded drilling will have an "insignificant" impact on oil prices, saving consumers a few pennies a gallon decades from now. In just the last eight years we've seen a 260 percent increase in drilling on our public lands while the price of gas has more than doubled. Any final bill should minimize expanded drilling and ensure that our nation's most cherished public lands and waters remain protected.

With only 3% of the world's oil, the United States could drill every national park, wildlife refuge and coastline, and still be importing most of its oil. As long as we are dependent on oil, we are susceptible to global supply and demand factors and the OPEC cartel, which can easily increase or decrease production to affect prices, easily adjusting to any new U.S. oil production.

Any final energy legislation, acted on by Congress this fall, should meet the test of giving consumers real energy choices, reducing global warming pollution and protecting our treasured landscapes for future generations. With the inclusion of commercial oil shale leasing, legislation being considered by the House today fails to meet this test. We urge you to oppose it and the motion to recommit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Schweiger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Larry Schweiger
President & CEO
National Wildlife Federation