

S 562

Geothermal Exploration Opportunities Act of 2015

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Energy

Introduced: Feb 25, 2015

Current Status: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-118.

Latest Action: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-118. (May 19, 2015)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/562>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Heller, Dean [R-NV]

Party: Republican • **State:** NV • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Risch, James E. [R-ID]	R · ID		Feb 25, 2015

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Energy and Natural Resources Committee	Senate	Hearings By (full committee)	May 19, 2015

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Energy

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 S 2012	Related bill	Sep 8, 2016: Conference held.

Geothermal Exploration Opportunities Act of 2015

This bill amends the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 to categorically exclude from the requirements for an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) a geothermal exploration test project on National Forest System land or land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) if the project is either:

- a geophysical exploration activity that does not require drilling;
- test drilling causing soil or vegetation disruption of fewer than 10 acres, including access, that is completed in fewer than 90 days and meets other requirements, such as for restoration of the site;
- test drilling causing an individual surface disturbance of fewer than 5 acres with a total surface disturbance of fewer than 150 acres when a site specific analysis has been prepared;
- test drilling on a site at which drilling has occurred within 5 years; or
- test drilling on the site of a developed field that has been approved for drilling in the last 10 years pursuant to an approved land use plan or any NEPA environmental documents.

A leaseholder of a geothermal lease on federal land intending to carry out a geothermal exploration test project must provide notice to the Department of the Interior, with respect to BLM land, or to the Department of Agriculture (USDA), with respect to National Forest System land . BLM and USDA must: review those projects, notify the leaseholder of project deficiencies that preclude the NEPA exemption, and allow leaseholders an opportunity to remedy those deficiencies prior to the date that the leaseholder intended to start drilling.

Actions Timeline

- **May 19, 2015:** Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-118.
- **Feb 25, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Feb 25, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.