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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contacts:** [Neal A. Patel](mailto:neal_patel@heller.senate.gov)/[Michawn Rich](mailto:michawn_rich@heller.senate.gov) | | January 28, 2016 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller Files Amendments to Murkowski-Cantwell Energy Efficiency Bill**  **(Washington, DC) –** U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) filed five amendments to the [*Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015*](http://www.energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=legislation&id=87D9E1CF-1B96-4815-9D05-387798EFAEA7) ([S. 2012](http://www.energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=56a384df-cffa-44eb-a1f4-540a72ab6b0f)), **a bipartisan energy bill focused on addressing national energy opportunities and challenges. It aims to save energy, increase domestic energy and mineral supplies, facilitate investment into critical infrastructure, improve grid security, and boost international trade.** The Senate will resume consideration of this bill next week.  “Reforming federal policies to reflect the energy and natural resources challenges of the 21st century is critical to ensuring an affordable, secure, and reliable electrical supply for our country. The amendments I filed are commonsense initiatives that will go a long way towards spurring innovation, boosting job creation, increasing domestic energy and mineral production, and reining back burdensome regulations,” said **Senator Dean Heller**. “Energy is one of Nevada’s and overall one of our nation’s greatest assets, and I appreciate the hard work Chairman Lisa Murkowski and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell have put in to bring this proposal to the floor of the Senate.”  **Background Information on Senator Heller’s Floor Amendments:**  ***Heller-Heinrich-Risch-Tester-Gardner-Wyden-Bennet-Daines-Udall Public Lands Renewable Energy Development Amendment* (**[No. 3043](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/7198a236-84c7-407f-bb15-cfc19e3dbb0c/Heller%20Public%20Land%20Renewable%20Energy%20Development%20Amendment%203043.pdf)**)**   * **This amendment improves permitting for utility-scale geothermal, wind and solar energy development on public lands. Additionally, it directs revenues generated by projects to impacted states and counties while facilitating conservation and improving recreational opportunities on public lands. This amendment is an updated version of bipartisan legislation Heller introduced earlier this year,** [S.1407](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=175121c0-d21f-4321-980c-4dd6f861f425)**.**   ***Heller-Reed Energy Storage Amendment* (**[No. 2993](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/34e77d7c-80df-4bd2-8b46-a96d3fd9e231/Heller-Reed%20Energy%20Storage%20PURPA%20Amendment%202993.pdf)**)**   * **This amendment encourages state utility regulatory commissions, like the Nevada Public Utility Commission, to consider energy storage systems in efforts to promote energy conservation and the more efficient use of domestic energy. Specifically, it adds an additional standard to the list of nineteen provisions currently laid out within Section 111(d) of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (PURPA), which range from energy efficiency investments and smart grid investments to minimizing the dependence on one fuel source.**   ***Reed-Heller Energy Storage Amendment* (**[No. 2989](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/e0d3bf6c-6698-4dce-9797-57c4f45111d1/Reed-Heller%20Energy%20Storage%20R&D%20Amendment%202989.pdf)**)**   * **This amendment authorizes the Secretary of Energy to coordinate efforts among the energy storage research and development programs and authorities at the Department of Energy (DOE). The DOE has several programs that allow for energy storage research and development, including the Grid Modernization Initiative, but these programs are not well coordinated. Section 2301(d) of S. 2012 provides for $50,000,000 for energy storage research for fiscal years 2017 through 2026, but does not provide any authority to coordinate such efforts. Specifically, the Reed-Heller amendment improves S. 2012 by adding language that guides the Secretary of Energy to coordinate energy storage research and development programs, including the Grid Modernization Initiative, which is the primary energy storage research program at DOE.**   ***Heller Environmental Protection Agency Accountability Amendment* (**[No. 2995](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/afa12f02-73d2-44f7-9aa9-dfd9741aadb9/Heller%20EPA%20Accountability%20Amendment%202995.pdf)**)**   * **It is important that the Congress ensure the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) follows its own guidelines and stops the agency from issuing burdensome regulations that increase energy costs and stifle economic growth. Specifically, this amendment ensures the EPA adheres to its own standards. This amendment mirrors legislation Heller introduced earlier this year,** [S.110](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s110is/pdf/BILLS-114s110is.pdf)**.**   ***Heller Financial Assurance Amendment* (**[No. 2994](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/c8804385-1581-4e35-a67f-c96dde9982a6/Heller%20Financial%20Assurance%20Amendment%202994.pdf)**)**   * **This amendment would prohibit the EPA from establishing any such new financial responsibility requirements on natural resources development. The EPA intends to propose new fees specifically for hard rock mining by August. This new regulation would be duplicative of financial assurance programs already in place at both the state and federal level and would** further discourage capital investment in the domestic mining industry.   **Heller Provisions Already Included in S. 2012:**  ***Public Land Job Creation Act* (**[S.113](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s113is/pdf/BILLS-114s113is.pdf)**)**   * [The Public Land Job Creation Act](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s113is/pdf/BILLS-114s113is.pdf), which [passed the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) in July 2015](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=5fd25d63-8bd6-4e43-8239-c6f16aa02233), streamlines the permitting process for mineral and energy development, while also preserving the time necessary for environmental analysis. Specifically, the provision provides the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service 45 days to complete the review process of permit notices. The entire Critical Minerals subtitle is based off the American Mineral Security Act of 2015 (S.883), of which Senator Heller is a cosponsor.   *Geothermal Exploration Opportunities (GEO) Act* ([S.562](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/9fdfd9fb-e6c4-4ede-bbab-270b65dcb7e2/GEO%20Act%202%2025%2015.pdf))   * **The** [GEO Act](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=a7e6e0b8-827d-461f-ad4e-448243ea4d22)**, which** [passed the ENR Committee in July 2015](http://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=5fd25d63-8bd6-4e43-8239-c6f16aa02233)**, creates a limited categorical exclusion for geothermal exploration activities on public lands so companies can test resources in Nevada and other western states. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) estimates nearly 90 percent of the geothermal energy potential in the nation is on federal lands. Under current rules, companies must go through a lengthy environmental review process just to see if a resource is viable, despite causing minimal surface disturbance. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that approval for exploration activities takes between 18 to 24 months. That process serves as a significant impediment to the expansion of geothermal energy development across the West.**   ### |