

**For Immediate Release:** Contact:

February 25, 2015 Neal A. Patel 202-224-6244

**Heller Seeks to Simplify Geothermal Exploration Review Process**

**(Washington, DC) –** Today, U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) introduced the Geothermal Exploration Opportunity (GEO) Act to streamline the review process for simple exploration activities. Following introduction, Heller issued this statement:

“As many developers in Nevada know, the environmental review process for geothermal production is a grueling process. What’s worse is these companies are forced to go through the same process to simply test if a resource is viable. At a time when Nevada is playing a major role in the United States’ ‘all-of-the-above’ energy strategy, the last thing our geothermal entrepreneurs need is unnecessary bureaucratic red tape,” said **Senator Dean Heller**. “For these reasons, I have introduced the GEO Act. The legislation will simplify the review process for initial exploration activities and give developers the tools they need to unleash Nevada’s abundant geothermal potential.”

**Background:**

The GEO Act 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](http://energy.usgs.gov/GeneralInfo/EnergyNewsroomAll/TabId/770/ArtMID/3941/ArticleID/730/Assessment-of-Moderate-and-High-Temperature-Geothermal-Resources-of-the-United-States.aspx%20http:/pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2008/3082/pdf/fs2008-3082.pdf).

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](http://en.openei.org/wiki/RAPID/Roadmap/Geo). That process serves as a significant impediment to the expansion of geothermal energy development across the West.

A PDF of the GEO Act is attached with this press release.

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