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## **Western Energy Alliance Supports Utah's Public Lands Initiative** [1]

**DENVER** – Western Energy Alliance welcomes the release by House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop and Congressman Jason Chaffetz of [draft language for the Utah Public Lands Initiative](#) [2]. After years of working with the state, counties, conservation groups, ranchers, industries, and other stakeholders, Representatives Bishop and Chaffetz have put forward important draft legislation that could help achieve a meaningful resolution to contentious public lands confrontations in Utah.

“After working with Congressmen Bishop and Chaffetz and a [broad range of Utah stakeholders](#) [3], we are proud to be part of this important milestone,” said Kathleen Sgamma, vice president of government and public affairs at [Western Energy Alliance](#) [4]. “[Balancing conservation and multiple-uses](#) [5] on public lands in Utah is important. For decades, certain groups and politicians from outside Utah had been pushing for a top-down bill to lock away millions of acres of public lands, whether or not those lands were supporting the economic viability of local communities or actually required special conservation. By engaging in a bottom-up approach with those directly affected as well as a broad range of stakeholders, Congressmen Bishop and Chaffetz have shown that collaboration and compromise can work, even on very contentious public lands issues.

“We will of course need to carefully evaluate the proposals, but we understand that no one stakeholder can get 100 percent of what it wants. We applaud the concept of energy planning areas that are primarily focused on energy development, and understand that in return other areas will be designated for conservation. We are concerned that prospective areas are being placed off-limits, since advances in technology have enabled the oil and natural gas industry to [reduce the impact on the land by as much as 70 percent](#) [6], and improved reclamation means that the impact from development is [small and temporary](#) [7].

“We are disappointed that the draft, which designates 4.3 million acres for conservation only, does not include a provision to require congressional consent for any Antiquities Act designation in Utah, as Wyoming enjoys. With such a large area designated for conservation, it seems that such a provision is in order,” concluded Sgamma.

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Western Energy Alliance represents over 450 companies engaged in all aspects of environmentally responsible exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the West. Alliance members are independents, the majority of which are small businesses with an average of fifteen employees.

### **Press Date:**

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

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**Source URL:** <https://www.westernenergyalliance.org/press-room/western-energy-alliance-supports-utah%E2%80%99s-public-lands-initiative>

### **Links:**

[1] <https://www.westernenergyalliance.org/press-room/western-energy-alliance-supports-utah%E2%80%99s-public-lands-initiative>

[2] <http://www.utahpli.com/>

[3] <http://robbishop.house.gov/24358907234590872340958273458/response-letters-from-participants.htm>

[4] <http://www.westernenergyalliance.org/>

[5] <http://archive.slttrib.com/story.php?ref=/slttrib/opinion/56862754-82/lands-public-energy-utah.html.csp>

[6] [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267765279\\_Oil\\_and\\_gas\\_impacts\\_on\\_Wyoming's\\_sage-grouse\\_summarizing\\_the\\_past\\_and\\_predicting\\_the\\_foreseeable\\_future](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267765279_Oil_and_gas_impacts_on_Wyoming's_sage-grouse_summarizing_the_past_and_predicting_the_foreseeable_future)

[7] <http://www.westernenergyalliance.org/knowledge-center/land/wilderness>