

News Release



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Western Energy Alliance Challenges DOI Breach of Federal Law *Brief filed in federal court challenges failure to issue leases*

(Denver)- Western Energy Alliance and six western oil and natural gas producers filed a brief in federal court on Friday challenging the Department of the Interior's (DOI) failure to issue oil and natural gas leases within sixty days after receiving payment as required by the Mineral Leasing Act.

The brief is the latest development in a lawsuit filed by and on behalf of western producers concerning leases that BLM has failed to issue, some dating back to 2005.

"Unlike those opposed to domestic energy development, western oil and natural gas producers are mostly small businesses who have no interest in litigation," said Kathleen Sgamma, Director of Government and Public Affairs. "But after years of repeated attempts to convince DOI to comply with federal law, we are left with no choice."

"In spite of a still-struggling economy, rising energy prices, and unrest in the Middle East, this administration continues to discourage the development of American energy by failing to issue oil and natural gas leases that have been won and paid for by American companies."

Friday's brief recognizes the Interior Secretary's discretion in deciding what parcels of federal land to lease, and the ability of the public to protest the sale of individual lease parcels *before* lease sales, but argues that once the Bureau of Land Management puts a parcel up for sale, the Mineral Leasing act requires the government to issue the leases within sixty days. Many of the leases in question were paid for over six years ago.

"Western energy producers are working diligently to develop American energy that belongs to all Americans," said Sgamma. "This lawsuit simply seeks to compel the Interior Department to comply with federal law so that our members can continue to supply 27% of our nation's natural gas and 14% of its oil production while impacting just 0.07% of public lands."

[Click here to view the brief.](#)

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Western Energy Alliance, founded in 1974, is a non-profit trade association representing more than 400 companies engaged in all aspects of environmentally responsible exploration and production of oil and natural gas in the West. More information on Western Energy Alliance and its members is available at www.westernenergyalliance.org.