

LIZ CHENEY

WYOMING AT-LARGE

CHAIR, HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE

COMMITTEES

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-5000**

April 1, 2020

The Honorable David L. Bernhardt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

As is the case with many businesses across America, the oil and gas industry is experiencing significant impacts as a result of COVID-19. The impacts to industry have, of course, been further exacerbated by Saudi Arabia, Russia and Iran dramatically increasing their oil production resulting in a supply glut in the market. As a follow-up to the Petroleum Association of Wyoming's letter to you dated March 31, 2020, there are some actions DOI, specifically BLM, can take in order to provide short-term relief to operators, particularly in Wyoming where close to 50% of the State's surface and a little over 65% of its minerals are federally-owned. As it stands, many operators have informed us they are suspending plans to drill this summer and are already starting to shut-in wells. With the following actions, hopefully we can emerge with an oil and gas industry that can continue to develop and provide much needed jobs and tax revenue in the future when the need to rebuild, and repair the effects we are experiencing as a result of COVID-19 and the recent dramatic market decline:

- Extend deadlines associated with exploratory units for one year. Such deadlines include those for commencement of obligation wells, paying well determinations and continuous drilling obligations.
- Allow federal exploratory units to be of the largest size proposed by operators that are geographically justified.
- Grant surface commingling and allocation approval requests if all regulatory criteria are met rather than requiring separation of production. BLM currently has the authority to do this, however, field offices have been reluctant to do so without explicit direction.
- Extend by one year existing APDs in the fourth year of their term that are set to expire within the next few months.
- Allow for operators to pay APD fees when BLM issues a final decision on those filed in calendar year 2020, rather than at the time of filing the APD.
- Facilitate the approval of applications for one-year suspension of operations and production for federal onshore leases.
- Ensure BLM will have the resources and staff to ensure that sundry and permit processing can continue in a timely manner as needed.

As the COVID-19 pandemic and oil supply glut continue to alter the economic landscape of the oil and gas industry, I respectfully request a response to the validity of these recommendations no later than April 14. Thank you for your timely response. Your leadership and direction in moving these items forward are of great importance.

Sincerely,



Liz Cheney  
Member of Congress

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE  
416 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
PHONE: (202) 225-2311

CHEYENNE OFFICE  
2120 CAPITOL AVENUE  
SUITE 8005  
CHEYENNE, WY 82001  
PHONE: (307) 772-2595

CASPER OFFICE  
PO BOX 44003 100 EAST B STREET  
ROOM 4003  
CASPER, WY 82602  
PHONE: (307) 261-6595

RIVERTON OFFICE  
325 WEST MAIN STREET  
UNIT B  
RIVERTON, WY 82501  
PHONE: (307) 463-0482

GILLETTE OFFICE  
300 SOUTH GILLETTE AVENUE  
SUITE 2001  
GILLETTE, WY 82716  
PHONE: (307) 414-1677