

**Statement for the Record  
Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources  
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources**

**H.R. 7458, Domestic Opportunities for Resource Exploration (Domestic ORE) Act**

**February 24, 2026**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this Statement for the Record on H.R. 7458, the Domestic Opportunities for Resource Exploration (Domestic ORE) Act. H.R. 7458 would expand the maximum acreage of notice-level operations from not more than 5 acres to not more than 25 acres of disturbance. The bill would also codify into law several of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) existing regulatory definitions related to exploration for locatable minerals. The Department defers to the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding the provisions in the bill concerning the lands and interests administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

The BLM supports H.R. 7458 and the bill's expansion of notice-level operations because it will streamline the permitting process in alignment with President Trump's vision for national and economic security, as described in Executive Order 14154, *Unleashing American Energy*, and Executive Order 14241, *Immediate Measures to Increase American Mineral Production*.

**Background**

Under the BLM's regulations at 43 CFR 3809, operators may submit a notice to conduct exploration activities resulting in 5 acres or less of surface disturbance of public lands, and for which the weight of samples collected for testing would be less than 1,000 tons. Operators must submit a complete notice of their operations 15 calendar days before commencing exploration causing surface disturbance of 5 acres or less and must not divide a project by submitting a series of notices for the purpose of avoiding filing a plan of operations.

**Analysis**

H.R. 7458 would codify into law the BLM's existing regulatory definitions of "casual use" and "operator" (43 CFR 3809.5). The bill would also substitute the term "exploration" with "exploration activity," would amend its definition by changing "mineral values" to "minerals," and would specify that "exploration activity" includes constructing drill roads and drill pads, drilling, trenching, excavating test pits, and conducting geotechnical tests and geophysical surveys. Additionally, the bill would codify into law the existing regulatory requirement for an operator to submit a notice not later than 15 days before commencing an exploration activity, and would increase the allowable surface disturbance from not more than 5 acres to not more than 25 acres of public lands.

Lastly, the bill would provide that not later than 15 days after an operator submits a notice to conduct exploration, the Secretary will allow the exploration activity to proceed if the surface disturbance will not be more than 25 acres of public lands, the notice includes the required

information, and the operator provides adequate financial assurance. If the notice is missing required information, the bill would direct the Secretary to notify the operator and specify what information is required.

The BLM would like to work with the Sponsor and Subcommittee on technical edits to ensure the language does not impose new requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act. The BLM would also like to clarify the relationship between the bill's requirements and the BLM's existing regulations governing the processing of and administration of notices, including clarification of whether the BLM's current bulk tonnage cap would still apply.

**Conclusion**

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this Statement for the Record.