

NATURAL GAS:

Clean Energy to Keep America Going Strong

Access to Government Lands

Natural gas is abundant in the United States, but in order to produce it, the industry must have access to “multiple-use” government lands.

- American natural gas producers work hard to ensure that we have the natural gas we need to heat and cool our homes, cook our food, power our industrial and electrical-generating plants in order to safeguard our quality of life.
- Around one-third of the land in the United States is controlled by the government, most of which is in the West. In Wyoming, for example, the government controls 50 percent of the land in the state. About one third of these government lands are set aside in national parks, wildlife refuges or wilderness areas. Most other federal lands are designated as “multiple-use” lands.
- More than one-third of the natural gas we produce in the United States is from multiple-use government lands, both onshore and offshore. These are government lands designated to be used for economic, recreational, and scientific purposes. Some 46% of the United States’ future natural gas resources are under government lands.
- There is ample supply to meet current demand for natural gas and our companies can continue to meet America’s needs -- but responsible land use policies are needed that allow natural gas to be produced on multiple-use government lands.

Since 1983, access to government lands in the western United States, where 40 percent of natural gas reserves are located, has fallen by 60 percent.

- Our search for new domestic offshore natural gas is limited to the Gulf of Mexico and Alaskan waters because of the congressional moratoria that have placed off-limits most of the rest of our coastal waters.
- Onshore, the President has used his executive powers to limit natural gas activity on vast regions of government lands.
- More recently, the U.S. Forest Service moved to make it more difficult for our companies to explore for natural gas on government lands when it announced a plan to bar road building in 43 million acres in the forest system.

Advanced technologies protect environmental concerns.

- Technology has revolutionized how natural gas is found and produced, resulting in minimal disturbances to the environment. Thanks to extraordinary advances in technology over the past 15 years, we can produce more gas with fewer wells. Offshore wells can safely capture natural gas in ocean depths of thousands of feet in areas far offshore.
- A U.S. Department of Energy study found that today’s natural gas exploration and production industry is proving that it can produce gas in ways that balance development with environmental protection.