

## **MANDATING NEW ONSHORE OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES**

Failed: 50-50

### **SUMMARY:**

The Senate rejected an amendment that would have mandated unnecessary new onshore oil and gas lease sales in addition to those already required under current law. (*August 7, 2022, Roll Call No. 291*)

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers 245 million acres of Federal public lands—10% of the U.S. land base—which serves as habitat for 330 species listed under the Endangered Species Act as well as thousands of additional at-risk species. These public lands are regularly leased to oil and gas companies for extraction as part of BLM's multiple-use land management mandate. As of 2021, the Bureau managed 37,469 Federal oil and gas leases covering 26.6 million acres with nearly 96,100 wells. Oil and gas projects can directly harm wildlife and their habitat. Federal lands are also not actively managed for conservation while under lease, which can impede the recovery of imperiled species. Over half of the acres currently under lease are not yet actually being used for oil and gas extraction.

President Biden had initially paused new oil and gas leases on public lands via executive order on January 27, 2021, pending a comprehensive review of Federal leasing practices, but onshore lease sales resumed in June 2022. The Inflation Reduction Act, H.R.5376, established beneficial rate increases for oil and gas development on public lands, but also mandated that the issuance of wind and solar permits would be contingent on also moving forward with unnecessary new onshore oil and gas lease sales. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) had successfully negotiated for these new leases as a condition of his support for this climate bill.

Sen. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) offered an amendment to the Inflation Reduction Act that would have further expanded onshore oil and gas development by mandating additional lease sales beyond what was already included in the bill. The oil and gas industry argues that the only way to address our country's energy challenges is to open more public lands and waters to oil and natural gas drilling (and to reduce environmental and safety standards). In truth, oil and gas drilling in America is already occurring at an alarming pace and in places where it should not be. Passage of this amendment would have resulted in more 500,000 acres of land being offered for lease—including land with low or no potential for development, land far from existing infrastructure, and land that serves as habitat to threatened and endangered species.

### **OUTCOME:**

On August 7, 2022, the Senate rejected the Barrasso amendment, 50-50. "No" was the pro-conservation vote. Subsequently, the final Inflation Reduction Act agreed to by both

Senate and House did not include the expanded oil and gas leasing mandate proposed in the Barrasso amendment but did include the more limited but still significant mandate from the base bill.