

# News Release



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## **First Week: Congress Deals Blow to Energy Security, Climate** *Passage of S. 22 will impede domestic energy development, hinder goals of increasing energy security and decreasing carbon footprint*

(DENVER)- The Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States (IPAMS) expressed concern over the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress' apparent lack of interest in helping President-elect Obama achieve his twin goals of increasing energy security and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"By further restricting access to the abundant, domestic, and clean natural gas in the Intermountain West, the U.S. Senate is sending a clear message to President-elect Obama and to the American people— 'We have no interest in increasing energy security and reducing our carbon footprint,'" said Marc W. Smith, IPAMS Executive Director.

While most Americans are anxious about the faltering economy and rising unemployment rates, today the Senate moved forward on S. 22, Public Lands Omnibus Bill, which restricts the development of energy resources on federal lands, and puts into place another layer of bureaucracy by creating the National Landscape Conservation System. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) brought the bill to a vote under an obscure rule that circumvented the committee process and did not give new members of Congress the chance to debate or amend the bill. The NLCS is also the subject of a Department of Interior Inspector General investigation into possible illegal coordination between lobbyists for environmental groups and federal officials.

"It is unconscionable to pass a 1,294 page bill just a week after new members of Congress were sworn in," said Smith. "Clearly there has been no deliberative process or thoughtful consideration of the consequences of this bill."

"Congress should have taken more time to analyze the impact of this broad-sweeping legislation on domestic energy production before it acted. The Intermountain West is a critical energy supplier to the country, contributing 27% of the nation's natural gas. America's dual goal of increasing energy security and reducing greenhouse gas emissions simply cannot be achieved if Congress continues to restrict domestic energy development," concluded Smith.

(more)

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Natural gas production on public lands in the Intermountain West will become even more important as President-elect Barack Obama and the 111th Congress seek to fulfill their campaign promises of making our nation less dependent on foreign sources of energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Ninety-seven percent of the natural gas consumed in the U.S. is produced in North America (27 percent of it in the West), and since it emits just over half the CO<sub>2</sub> of coal, we will need even more natural gas in order to reduce our carbon footprint in coming years.

S. 22 also creates a whole new Federal lands classification for National Heritage Areas (NHA) that would extend National Park Service jurisdiction beyond national park and monument boundaries, and sets aside the energy-rich Wyoming Range, where enormous supplies of domestic, clean natural gas are located.

"Less than six months ago, Congress wouldn't have dared restrict domestic energy development. Since then, prices have fallen with reduced world demand and increased supplies of domestic natural gas. Even so, the underlying challenges of energy security remain. Placing even more lands off limits will limit where natural gas, wind, and other clean sources of energy can be produced."

"It's important for Congress to remember that natural gas development is a very small and temporary impact on our federal lands. Independent energy producers go above and beyond the literally thousands of environmental regulations now in place to ensure that wildlife and the environment are protected. The energy resources located beneath these lands belong to all of us, and Congress should allow them to be developed for the benefit of all Americans," concluded Smith.

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## About IPAMS

*The Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States (IPAMS), founded in 1974, is a non-profit trade association representing more than 400 independent natural gas and oil producers, service and supply companies, banking and financial institutions and industry consultants committed to environmentally responsible oil and natural gas development in the Intermountain West. More information on IPAMS and its members is available at [www.ipams.org](http://www.ipams.org).*