

**Western Resource Advocates – Colorado Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Federation – Colorado Environmental Coalition
Earthjustice – EcoFlight**

February 15, 2012

Dear Representative Polis,

We are writing to voice our strong support for your amendment that would strip HR 3408 (PIONEERS Act) from the transportation bill currently being considered in the House of Representatives. Key questions about oil shale's water demands, impacts to wildlife, economic impacts to communities, impacts to our outdoor recreation economy, and other issues must be addressed prior to any consideration of commercial leasing.

Potential development of Colorado's oil shale deposits raises significant concerns about impacts to our water, land, air and local communities. HR 3408 would force commercial leasing before the impacts of development are understood, leaving local communities with few options and inadequate resources to deal with those impacts. Commercial leasing now without proven commercial technology might benefit a company's asset side of its balance sheets, but would not yield a public benefit.

Compounding the problem is that HR 3408 is being proffered as a vehicle to raise revenue for roads and other transportation projects by mandating that the Department of the Interior lease 125,000 acres starting in 2016. The Congressional Budget Office, however, scored HR 3408 as \$0 through at least 2022, as it could not conceive of a scenario under this legislation where a viable commercial oil shale industry would emerge. The Government Accountability Office reached similar conclusions about the nascent state of the industry in its October 2010 report.

While oil shale is producing no energy, no jobs, and no revenue, we have the opportunity to figure out the impacts to water, wildlife and local communities. That's why HR 3408 is so misguided, and why we strongly support your efforts to strike the PIONEERS Act from the Transportation bill.

Sincerely,

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