

Gas group release sparks questions



By BOBBY MAGILL The Daily Sentinel

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The Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States announced in a scathing news release Thursday that a congressional field hearing about energy development on the Roan Plateau will be next week, but it did not substantiate its claims.

Energy companies are “bracing” for the House Natural Resources Committee hearing, IPAMS claimed in the news release, which did not say which congressmen may be involved or provide a time or location for the hearing. It said the hearing will conflict with the “Fueling Thought: Trends in Energy” symposium scheduled for May 4 in Craig.

Tara Trujillo, spokeswoman for Rep. John Salazar, D-Colo., said Thursday that such a hearing may be “under discussion” but nothing has been scheduled.

Salazar and Rep. Mark Udall, D-Colo., visited Glenwood Springs in February to talk about the Roan Plateau at the invitation of conservation groups who want to the congressmen to introduce legislation curtailing potential energy development atop the Roan Plateau.

The news release said the hearing was announced with one week’s notice, preventing Republicans, who no longer control the House Natural Resources Committee, from attending the hearing.

IPAMS, an outspoken booster of drilling the Roan for natural gas, also claimed in the news release that the hearing may be an attempt by Democrats to repeal the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

IPAMS spokesman Jon Bargas did not return phone calls or an e-mail seeking comment.

Grand Valley Citizens Alliance President Duke Cox, of Silt Mesa, said he heard something about a hearing, but knew no details.

If IPAMS is “saying that some anti-energy coalition has got something up their sleeve here, don’t you suppose I would know about it?” Cox said.

The news release, he said, “sounds pretty fishy to me. You’re going to continue to hear this story that there’s this conspiracy of environmentalists that want to run the industry out of Colorado.”

No such conspiracy exists, he said.

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Bobby Magill can be reached via e-mail at bmagill@gids.com.