

Rocky Mountain News.com

HOME NEWS BUSINESS SPORTS RECREATION SPOTLIGHT OPINION WEB EXTRA JOBS AUTOS HOMES CLASSIFIEDS SHOP

Advertisement

HOME > BUSINESS > ENERGY & MINING

# Energy lobby marshals forces

## Oil, gas drillers preparing to fight for rights on Roan

By Gargi Chakrabarty, Rocky Mountain News

August 3, 2007

As Congress debates a bill today that would block energy development on Garfield County's Roan Plateau, the Denver oil and gas lobby is preparing to roll out a counter-blitzkrieg.

Colorado Democratic Reps. John Salazar and Mark Udall say a provision in the Energy Independence Act would bar the federal Bureau of Land Management from allowing companies to drill in public lands on top of the Roan Plateau. Congress is expected to vote on the bill today.

The scenic Roan, beloved by hunters and anglers for its wilderness backcountry and diverse wildlife, is estimated to contain enough natural gas to heat 9 million homes for nine years.

America's push for energy independence and the rising price of oil and gas underscore the need for drilling atop the Roan in a responsible manner, Colorado Secretary of State Mike Coffman said Thursday.

A newly formed nonprofit in Denver, Americans for American Energy, has raised tens of thousands of dollars to launch a campaign in the coming weeks to push for drilling on the Roan, also known as U.S. Naval Oil Shale Reserves. But the group is experiencing teething pains.

Coffman had accepted an offer to chair the AAE board about two months ago but backed out Thursday afternoon - less than an hour after inquiries from the *Rocky Mountain News*.

He has been replaced by Bill Vasey, a Democratic state senator from Wyoming, said Jim Sims of Policy Communications, a Golden-based lobbying firm that will provide AAE with staffing.

"AAE is going to make the U.S. Naval Oil Shale Reserves a national symbol of American energy independence," Sims said. "If America can't harvest clean-burning natural gas from the U.S. Naval Oil Shale Reserves, than where the hell can it harvest it?"

Sims said Greg Schnacke, executive director of the Colorado Oil and Gas Association, will help lead the campaign. Schnacke will join AAE as soon as the association finds a replacement, likely in a month or so.

The campaign will include rallies, television and radio advertisements, and other outreach and education efforts, Sims said.

The Salazar-Udall amendment in the energy bill will "cost the state of Colorado \$1 billion in lost revenues and circumvents a nearly decadelong public-planning process which allows extremely limited drilling" in the area, said Marc Smith, executive director of the Independent Petroleum Association of Mountain States.

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., is blocking the confirmation of President Bush's nominee to head the BLM, James Caswell, until the agency heeds his requests.

Salazar and several other Colorado Democrats are trying to stop a BLM plan finalized this summer that authorized up to 1,570 new natural gas wells on the Roan Plateau. Salazar wants federal land managers to delay the leasing of public land on the Roan to allow Democratic Gov. Bill Ritter time to review plans for drilling on the plateau.

The Interior Department this week rejected a request Salazar made last month to give Colorado more time to review the BLM's Roan plan.

Ritter also has asked the BLM not to lease the scenic Vermillion Basin in northwest Colorado for oil and gas drilling.

[chakrabartyg@RockyMountainNews.com](mailto:chakrabartyg@RockyMountainNews.com) or 303-954-2976



Matt McClain © The Rocky

Roads cut through the Roan Plateau outside Rifle in an area that may be the site of more oil and gas drilling. A provision in the Energy Independence Act would bar the Bureau of Land Management from allowing companies to drill on public lands on the Roan Plateau, but the energy industry is preparing to lobby hard to make sure that prohibition doesn't come to pass.

### STORY TOOLS

[Email this story](#) | [Print](#)

### RELATED STORIES

[Coffman backs off Roan role](#)

### MORE STORIES

[Oil, gas firm scores \\$1 billion](#)  
[Colo. studies Calif.'s tough energy rules](#)

Rmnwebfriends.com

SEARCH

[Subscribe](#) | [E-mail alerts](#) | [Electronic edition](#) | [RSS](#)

YOUR PORTFOLIO

ENERGY & MINING STOCKS

Index	Change	% change	Value
▲ DLOV	0.05	16.67	0.35
▼ ENDE	-0.004	-16.00	0.021
▲ UHCP	0.10	14.08	0.81

Delayed 20 minutes

[Local indices](#) | [Regional stocks](#) | [Symbol lookup](#)

MARKET WATCH

BUSINESS CALENDAR

Advertisement

SPONSORED LINKS

- World Travel
- Lasik Denver eye surgery
- Cash Advance
- Denver Real Estate
- Juarez Mexico Guide
- Compare Prices
- Telecommunications Expense
- Free Online Dating
- Fundraisers
- Attorney Finder
- Online Shopping
- Whole House Fans
- Lingerie
- Personal Loan
- Direct Mailing Lists
- Colorado Real Estate
- Juarez Mexico Forum

Advertisement

[Sales Management Training](#)

Advanced training for sales managers & professionals in complex sales.  
http://www.primeresource.com/

[How's your credit score?](#)

0-500 Poor, 501-700 Average, 701+ Good. Find out your score now FREE!  
CreditReport.com

[AARP Auto Ins Quotes](#)

Over 50? Save \$303 On Auto Ins With The Hartford. Free No Hassle Quote  
AARP.TheHartford.com

[Refinance Today at 3.5%](#)

\$200,000 loan for \$584/month. Get 4 Free Quotes. Save Now!  
Refinance.RefinanceSave.com



Scripps Newspaper Group — Online  
© 2007 The E.W. Scripps Co.  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#)



[ARCHIVE](#) | [ABOUT US](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [RSS FEEDS](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) | [SITE MAP](#) | [PHOTO REPRINTS](#) | [CORRECTIONS](#)

Questions? Comments? [Talk to Us.](#)

Comparison shop at [Shopzilla](#) and [BizRate](#) | [uSwitch.com](#) compares **gas & electricity**, **home phone**, **mobile phones**, **broadband**, **credit cards**, **loans** and **car insurance**

