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## **Senate Energy Bill Would Help Achieve the Nation's Geothermal Potential, Industry Leaders Say**

PRESS RELEASE: Washington, July 23, 2015. Representatives of the U.S. geothermal industry applauded U.S. Sens. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alas., and Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., for legislation introduced yesterday. Their broad, bipartisan energy bill, The Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015, "would help America achieve its geothermal potential," commented Karl Gawell, Executive Director of the Geothermal Energy Association, "by addressing some of the most important barriers to geothermal development in the U.S."

"The U.S. has world class geothermal resources waiting to be developed that can supply baseload renewable power," said Terry Page, Director of Regulatory Affairs for Enel Green Power North America, owner and operator of three geothermal facilities throughout the U.S. including the 33-MW Stillwater geothermal site. "The policy changes contained in The Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015 would help remove some of the barriers to geothermal development and help spur new investment in an expanded U.S. geothermal industry."

"The provisions in this bill will help reduce timelines in the geothermal development process and unlock new utility-scale projects, said Josh Nordquist, Director of Business Development for Ormat Nevada Inc. "We at Ormat Nevada Inc. commend Senators Murkowski and Cantwell for working with the industry on these cost-effective policy solutions."

The legislation features five titles reflecting common ground on energy efficiency, infrastructure, supply, accountability, and land conservation. In the supply title, it includes several provisions supporting geothermal energy. It would:

- set a 50,000-MW National Geothermal Goal;
- direct federal agencies to identify priority areas for development;
- allow federal oil and gas lease holders to obtain a non-competitive geothermal lease to facilitate coproduction of geothermal power -- today 25 billion barrels of hot water are produced annually from oil and gas wells within the United States;
- facilitate new discoveries by allowing the limited non-competitive leasing of adjacent lands where a new discovery has been made; and

- provide geothermal exploration test projects a limited categorical exclusion provided the lands involved present no extraordinary circumstances.

Earlier this week the Senate Finance Committee voted 23-3 in support of legislation sponsored by Sens. Hatch, R-Utah, and Wyden, D-Ore., to extend the expired Production Tax Credit for geothermal power plants that start construction by December 31, 2016. “The clean baseload geothermal energy produced as a result of these important measures will help the nation achieve a more diverse and reliable electricity supply, reduce emissions, grow state and local economies, and create jobs in both the oil and gas, and the renewable sectors,” said Gawell.

The Murkowski-Cantwell legislation builds upon legislative proposals introduced previously by Sens. Heller, R-Nev., Wyden, D-Ore., and Tester, D-Mont., along with several co-sponsors. The bill now awaits the Committee’s markup, expected next Tuesday.

**About the Geothermal Energy Association:**

The Geothermal Energy Association (GEA) is a trade association comprised of U.S. companies that support the expanded use of geothermal energy and are developing geothermal resources worldwide for electrical power generation and direct-heat uses. For more information, please visit [www.geo-energy.org](http://www.geo-energy.org). Subscribe to GEA’s newsletter [here](#). Follow GEA on [Twitter](#). Become a fan on [Facebook](#).

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