July 11, 2014

Honorable Tom Udall
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

The purpose of this letter is to express the support of Western Governors for S. 2440, the BLM Permit Processing Improvement Act of 2014, legislation to reauthorize the Federal Permit Streamlining Pilot Project (Pilot Project). Western Governors applaud your bipartisan effort to permanently reauthorize the Pilot Project and extend the Processing Improvement Fund (Fund).

As you know, the Pilot Project was created in 2005 to streamline the permit application process for the development and exploration of oil and natural gas on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. Based on feedback from affected states, it is clear that the Pilot Project has been successful in facilitating the development of domestic energy resources and merits continuation.

The Fund was intended to enhance streamlining efforts by allocating to Pilot Project offices a portion of annual rental fees paid by oil and natural gas development companies in connection with their leases on BLM land. Governors appreciate that language is included in S. 2440 to extend payment of such fees through 2026 and require that 75 percent of the revenue generated by fee payments shall be returned to the original permitting office. The legislation also strengthens the Pilot Project by providing the Secretary of the Interior with authority and flexibility to establish additional Pilot Project offices as new priorities and needs emerge.

We thank you for your leadership on this important Western issue. Western Governors look forward to working with you to ensure continued success of the Pilot Project.

Respectfully,

James D. Ogsbury
Executive Director

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A similar letter has been sent to Senator John Barrasso.

cc: Secretary Sally Jewell, US Department of Interior
    Neil Kornze, Director, US Bureau of Land Management
    Congressman Rob Bishop, Utah