Secretary Zinke signs order to streamline permitting for onshore resources development

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Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke signed Secretarial Order 3354 on July 6 to promote energy exploration and development through better management of leasing programs for onshore oil and gas resources and solid mineral resources on federal lands. The Order directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to hold quarterly lease sales, as outlined in the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, and to identify additional options to enhance the leasing programs. The Order also intends to streamline the permitting process overall. The Mineral Leasing Act requires oil and gas lease sales, where eligible, to be available at least quarterly or more frequently if determined necessary by the Secretary of the Interior. According to Secretary Zinke, multiple quarterly federal lease sales have been postponed or cancelled since 2009.

The Order aligns with the Trump administration’s goal to make America energy dominant, as announced by Energy Secretary Rick Perry in the White House Daily Briefing on June 27. Over the past decade, the total amount of onshore and offshore oil production on federal lands has fallen by 10%, while oil production on private and state lands in the same time frame has more than doubled. Secretary Perry expressed his belief during the briefing that unleashing the energy potential in this country with a diverse energy portfolio will lead to job growth and economic expansion in every sector.

Sources: C-SPAN, E&E News, Department of the Interior