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On April 30, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) new regulations for hydraulic fracturing on federal land. Republican Senators expressed frustration with the rule, which they said would cause delays in permitting and an exodus of development on federal land. No Democrats attended the hearing.

Neil Kornze, Director of BLM, testified that the new regulations will update BLM's last hydraulic fracturing rule, which was created in 1985, before the development of modern horizontal drilling technology. Kornze maintained the new rules follow current industry best practices and would require only four additional work hours per permit for BLM.

Kathleen Sgamma, Vice President of Government and Public Affairs for the Western Energy Alliance, expressed her frustration with the rule because it would require more paperwork from developers and lead to delays. She emphasized that the new regulations would not encourage development on federal land.

Republican senators expressed concerns over the regulation being a duplication of states' regulatory efforts. Kornze explained that states whose regulations are stricter than the federal rule may use the most stringent standard. The new rule would establish a base requirement across the U.S. allowing for regulatory consistency for the 19 states with BLM leases on federal land that do not have regulations.

Source: E&E News, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
