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At a July 15 hearing held by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, Neil Kornze, Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), testified on BLM's proposed regulations for hydraulic fracturing on federal and tribal lands.

Representatives inquired about granting variances, or partial exemptions from the BLM rule, to states that already have more stringent regulations than what the BLM rule would require. Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) defended Wyoming's disclosure and monitoring regulations and asked whether BLM could grant a wholesale exemption to Wyoming. Kornze said that BLM may grant variances to state regulators, but noted that BLM cannot move forward with rule implementation until a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court of Wyoming is resolved. Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) disputed the legality of granting variances on the grounds that "delegating regulatory authority to states without specific statutory approval" was not part of the BLM's authority. According to Kornze, BLM estimates that implementing its regulations would cost about \$11,000 for an average well; however, Lloyd Hetrick, testifying for Newfield Exploration Co., said that delays and well shutdowns would make this price much higher. Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) contended that current BLM regulations, adopted about thirty years ago, have not kept pace with technological advances in hydraulic fracturing, such as horizontal drilling and increased well depth.

Sources: E&E News, House.gov, BLM.gov
