



## **American Helium Production Act**

S. 1226 includes a series of common-sense actions designed to increase domestic helium production as the Federal Helium Reserve enters its final years of operation.

### ***Background***

Helium is a natural element that is generally extracted from natural gas and refined for use in magnetic resonance imaging, semiconductor manufacturing, military aviation, Federal research, pressurization and purging systems, leak detection, welding, and breathing mixtures. As the Federal Helium Reserve enters its final years of operation, the U.S. risks having a substantial share of its current helium supply go offline, without any guarantee of replacement from new private development. Right now, however, there is no standardized leasing process for helium development on federal lands. Ownership of helium on federal lands is instead reserved to the government and leaseholders must request the rights to develop helium on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Key Provisions***

- Establishes a leasing program for helium exploration, development, and production under the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA), under the same general terms and conditions as for oil and natural gas.
- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to facilitate helium production.
  - A PEIS is a broad, regional analysis that could help identify areas that are open to helium production.
  - In 2008, BLM completed a PEIS for geothermal energy, and its Record of Decision amended 114 resource management plans to specify which lands were open to potential geothermal leasing.
- Contributes to the continued helium security of the United States.