

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2300

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 6, 2000

Referred to the Committee on Resources

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## AN ACT

To amend the Mineral Leasing Act to increase the maximum acreage of Federal leases for coal that may be held by an entity in any 1 State.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Coal Market Competi-  
5 tion Act of 2000”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that—

3 (1) Federal land contains commercial deposits  
4 of coal, the Nation’s largest deposits of coal being  
5 located on Federal land in Utah, Colorado, Montana,  
6 and the Powder River Basin of Wyoming;

7 (2) coal is mined on Federal land through Fed-  
8 eral coal leases under the Act of February 25, 1920  
9 (commonly known as the “Mineral Leasing Act”)  
10 (30 U.S.C. 181 et seq.);

11 (3) the sub-bituminous coal from these mines is  
12 low in sulfur, making it the cleanest burning coal for  
13 energy production;

14 (4) the Mineral Leasing Act sets for each  
15 leasable mineral a limitation on the amount of acre-  
16 age of Federal leases any 1 producer may hold in  
17 any 1 State or nationally;

18 (5)(A) the present acreage limitation for Fed-  
19 eral coal leases has been in place since 1976;

20 (B) currently the coal lease acreage limit of  
21 46,080 acres per State is less than the per-State  
22 Federal lease acreage limit for potash (96,000 acres)  
23 and oil and gas (246,080 acres);

24 (6) coal producers in Wyoming and Utah are  
25 operating mines on Federal leaseholds that contain  
26 total acreage close to the coal lease acreage ceiling;

1           (7) the same reasons that Congress cited in en-  
2           acting increases for State lease acreage caps applica-  
3           ble in the case of other minerals—the advent of  
4           modern mine technology, changes in industry eco-  
5           nomics, greater global competition, and the need to  
6           conserve Federal resources—apply to coal;

7           (8) existing coal mines require additional lease  
8           acreage to avoid premature closure, but those mines  
9           cannot relinquish mined-out areas to lease new acre-  
10          age because those areas are subject to 10-year rec-  
11          lamation plans, and the reclaimed acreage is counted  
12          against the State and national acreage limits;

13          (9) to enable them to make long-term business  
14          decisions affecting the type and amount of additional  
15          infrastructure investments, coal producers need cer-  
16          tainty that sufficient acreage of leasable coal will be  
17          available for mining in the future; and

18          (10) to maintain the vitality of the domestic  
19          coal industry and ensure the continued flow of valu-  
20          able revenues to the Federal and State governments  
21          and of energy to the American public from coal pro-  
22          duction on Federal land, the Mineral Leasing Act  
23          should be amended to increase the acreage limitation  
24          for Federal coal leases.

1 **SEC. 3. COAL MINING ON FEDERAL LAND.**

2 Section 27(a) of the Act of February 25, 1920 (30  
3 U.S.C. 184(a)), is amended—

4 (1) by striking “(a)” and all that follows  
5 through “No person” and inserting “(a) COAL  
6 LEASES.—No person”;

7 (2) by striking “forty-six thousand and eighty  
8 acres” and inserting “75,000 acres”; and

9 (3) by striking “one hundred thousand acres”  
10 each place it appears and inserting “150,000 acres”.

Passed the Senate October 5 (legislative day, Sep-  
tember 22), 2000.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,  
*Secretary.*