

Utah's pragmatic development plan for oil shale and other energy resources

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The State of Utah has vital oil and gas industries, and is focused on the continued facilitation of fossil resource development in the areas of oil shale and oil sands, in accordance with Governor Gary R. Herbert's 10-Year Strategic Energy Plan published in 2011. Oil shale is a vast resource both globally and in Utah, and domestic and international companies have shown its enormous potential through research and development, economic and environmental impact analyses, and regulatory efforts at both the federal and state levels. Utah's 2012 General Legislative Session saw the passage of the Alternative Energy Development Incentive (S.B. 65), the Utah Energy Infrastructure Authority (H.B. 137), and the Uintah Basin Energy Zone (H.B. 83). Further, state agencies such as the Office of Energy Development (OED), the Utah Geological Survey (UGS), the State Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA), and the Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining (DOGM) have worked tirelessly to compile comprehensive databases of mineral resource information, opened up state lands for oil shale and oil sands leasing, and have permitted one oil shale project and one oil sands project in the past twelve months. The State of Utah has a diverse and profound portfolio of energy resources, among which oil shale is potentially the most valuable, especially in this era in which energy independence is increasingly critical. For that reason Utah's policymakers and business leaders are intently focused on addressing the handful of political and environmental impediments standing in the way of significant oil shale development activities.