

## **Oil shale leasing policy--what are we really waiting for?**

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A common thought within some circles is that we need to know more about various issues such as water usage before setting oil-shale leasing policy. While this might seem reasonable at first glance, further thought shows that it is illogical. Regulations should be set on what impacts are acceptable, balancing costs and benefits, and not what is technically possible. It is then the responsibility of industry to meet those regulations. The regulations should be set so that a significant-sized sustainable industry could be established with acceptable environmental impacts. If industry cannot achieve profitable and sustainable production, society must accept the cost of alternative sources of energy or reconsider the regulations. Even though what is possible should only be a secondary consideration when setting regulations, a large amount of information is available on issues such as water usage, air emissions, and land disturbance that is ignored by those who say they need more information. Some of this information is reviewed.