

September 2, 2025

Dear Representative:

The 18 organizations below write on behalf of our millions of members and supporters to strongly oppose H.J. Res. 104/S.J. Res.61, a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution of disapproval to rescind the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Miles City Field Office's 2024 Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) that ended new coal leasing in Montana's Powder River Basin. We urge you to vote no on this resolution as it would reopen the nation's largest coal producing region to coal leasing and risk upending the public lands management system as we know it.

For decades, the federal coal leasing program has permitted companies to permanently damage public lands and increase greenhouse gas emissions without ensuring sufficient oversight or even providing a fair return to taxpayers for the extraction of public resources. Today, more than 43% of all coal produced in the U.S., and more than 85% of all federal coal extracted from public lands, comes from the Powder River Basin region of Montana and Wyoming. In 2024, BLM issued new RMPAs for the Miles City (Montana) and Buffalo (Wyoming) Field Offices, which ended new coal leasing in the Powder River Basin while permitting existing mines to continue their operations under existing leases. Those decisions came after a federal district court Judge struck down two Trump-era RMPAs for the Powder River Basin that proposed allowing nearly 6 billion tons of coal to be strip-mined from the region over the next 20 years. The 2024 Miles City Field Office RMPA that is the subject of H.J. Res. 104/S.J. Res.61, rightfully halted new coal leasing in the region because of the significant harm it would cause to the climate and public health. The RMPA acknowledged that new coal leases are simply unnecessary given decreasing demand for coal as the nation and the world shift towards cleaner and more affordable forms of energy.

Rescinding the Miles City RMPA and prohibiting any future RMPA that is "substantially the same" would re-open a significant portion of the Powder River Basin to coal mining at a time when Congress and the Trump administration are slashing coal mining royalty rates, recklessly approving coal mines, and forcing uneconomic coal-fired power plants to continue operating past their closing date. That is a recipe for disaster for our climate, local public lands and water resources, and impacted communities who have hardly begun to recover from the decades of water and air pollution caused by mining in the Basin. It would also jeopardize ranchers, farmers, and landowners' livelihoods who reside on split-estate lands that would be open to mining if the Miles City RMPA was rescinded.

Furthermore, using the CRA to rescind any single land management plan would have potentially catastrophic impacts for public land management across the country. The CRA is a blunt-force anti-regulatory tool with far-reaching, unforeseen consequences. In addition, the federal land management agencies have never routinely submitted land management plans to Congress as "rules" under the CRA. If Congress were to begin using the CRA to pick and choose which land management plans to throw out, almost every single land management plan that has been issued since the passage of the CRA in 1996 could be at risk of a politically-motivated attack by a simple majority in each chamber to rescind it. As a result, important protections for communities and ecosystems would be undone; uncertainty would ensue for communities and businesses that rely on public lands; leases, permits, and authorizations that depend on disapproved plans would be cast into doubt; and the input of stakeholders and expertise of career civil servants who develop land management plans would be supplanted by partisan politics.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose H.J. Res. 104/S.J. Res.61.

Sincerely
Center for Biological Diversity
Climate Justice Alliance

Diné C.A.R.E.
Earthjustice Action
League of Conservation Voters
Montana Environmental Information Center
Montana Wildlife Federation
Northern Plains Resource Council
Sierra Club
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Tó Nizhóní Ání
Western Environmental Law Center
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Wild Hope
WildEarth Guardians
Wildlife for All
198 methods
350 Montana