

Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

September 7, 2022

HR 7021 Update

Chairman Lemm, members of the committee. This is going to be a pretty brief presentation.

Chairman Lemm asked me to give the committee an update on HR 7021. This is also commonly referred to as the Landowner Rights Easement Act. HR 7021 was introduced on March 9, 2022, by Congresswoman Michelle Fischbach of Minnesota and has been co-sponsored by Congressman Kelly Armstrong. HR 7021 is a piece of federal legislation that:

"Prohibits the Department of the Interior from entering into a conservation easement with a term of more than 50 years. The bill sets forth requirements for the renegotiation of a conservation easement at the request of an owner of land that is subject to a conservation easement that (1) has been in effect for longer than 50 years, or (2) was put into effect before 1977 without the creation of an official corresponding map. Interior shall notify such an owner of the owner's right to submit a request."

This bill echoes some of the discussions among committee members and presenters at prior meetings. Since its introduction, HR 7021 was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources. Earlier this week, I spoke with Congressman Armstrong's Agriculture Policy Aid in the Washington DC office. He indicated that a hearing on this bill has not been scheduled. He also indicated that it is unlikely that the committee will even discuss this bill as the bill is not necessarily in line with the majority's policy priorities. I share this information with you today to alert the committee that there is an effort at the federal level to reform these easements. However, it may take a different Congress for this bill to gain any momentum. That is all of the information that I have on this topic. Thank you.