



Press Release

The Challenges to Deploying Geothermal Energy

ANDREW EVANS | MARCH 2, 2020

Tonight the Advanced Geothermal Innovation Leadership (AGILE) Act (S.2657) — which seeks to encourage the development of power plants that harness the earth’s latent heat — heads to the Senate floor for a vote. AAF’s Senior Regulatory Policy Analyst Dan Goldbeck examines the economic and regulatory challenges that geothermal energy faces and outlines policy changes that could speed the deployment of this clean and reliable energy source.

His central points:

- Despite relatively minimal use currently, geothermal energy has some important benefits: As a natural, renewable energy source it is cleaner than fossil fuel plants while also being more reliable than other renewables such as wind and solar;
- Geothermal plants face a unique set of challenges, however: They are geographically limited and bring higher per-unit capital costs than the usual baseload plants, and the regulatory hurdles under the current permit process can take up to a decade to complete; and
- Research suggests that a greater commitment to researching more advanced technologies in concert with regulatory consolidation – reforms included in current legislation – could yield a “26-fold” increase in the amount of geothermal energy produced in coming decades.