

## Gov to headline Wyoming Range hearing

By Staff, Wyoming Business Report

**February 19, 2008 --**

WASHINGTON D. C. – Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal will testify in a U.S. Senate hearing on Sen. John Barrasso's Wyoming Range bill later this month.

The bill is aimed at protecting more than 1.2 million acres of the Bridger Teton National Forest and the Wyoming Range.

The hearing will take place in the Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 27. Barrasso is the lead Republican on this committee.

"This is an enormously important issue," Barrasso said. "The governor and I share a commitment to the Wyoming Range. We must keep and enhance the sportsmen, tourism and recreation economy of the Wyoming Range. We must preserve this key part of Wyoming's natural heritage."

Sen. Barrasso was instrumental in identifying witnesses, both in favor and opposed to the legislation, from a wide array of stakeholders.

Additional witnesses include Gary Amerine, outfitter and co-founder of Citizens Protecting Wyoming Range, speaking in favor of the bill. An opposing view is expected from Claire Moseley of Public Lands Advocacy.

"I'm pleased we are moving forward on protecting the Wyoming Range – the heart and soul of our state," Barrasso said. "There is a vast coalition working to preserve the extraordinary natural landscapes of the range."

"This is about sportsmen -- those of us who carry guns and fishing rods and enjoy Wyoming's outdoor heritage," said Tom Reed, spokesperson for Sportsmen for the Wyoming Range. "This bill proves that in Wyoming we can have balance; the state can lead the way in our nation's energy needs with development in many parts of Wyoming, but we can also conserve a mountain range for generations of Wyomingites to come."

The bill, S. 2229, would prohibit future oil and gas leasing in the Wyoming Range and provide a buy-out process that respects the property rights of current leaseholders. The bill would allow for remaining leases to be voluntarily purchased, presumably by conservation groups.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510-6150, or by e-mail to [rachel\\_pasternack@energy.senate.gov](mailto:rachel_pasternack@energy.senate.gov).