



The Ranching Without Red Tape Act

REP. GABE VASQUEZ (NM-02)

Under current law, ranchers that hold a grazing permit on federal lands must renegotiate their permit if they would like to make a range improvement not explicitly outlined in their original agreement. Range improvements can vary from fixing a fence to replacing a water line and are vital in managing livestock and increasing production on ranches.

The Ranching Without Red Tape Act would allow ranchers to make minor range improvements to existing, structural improvements, including fences and fence lines, wells, water pipelines, and stock tanks, without having to renegotiate their permit. The bill would also instruct USFS or BLM to expedite permittee requests for the agency to carry out improvements by using tools like categorical exclusions. This legislation would remove bureaucratic restrictions on ranchers, which would allow some of our nation's most important producers to conduct their operations more easily while still protecting our lands from major unsupervised changes.

Renegotiating a permit can be a complicated process that stalls important range improvements. According to USFS and BLM, under the optimal conditions and with available staff, a simple improvement to a fence line can take months to complete and can take longer than a year for more complex improvements. Common-sense improvements should receive common-sense approvals.

This bill would:

- Allow permittees to carry out minor range improvements within a short timeline if their request is approved by USFS or BLM, and allow permittees to make improvements if the agencies do not respond within that timeframe
- Instruct USFS and BLM to respond to applicable larger improvement requests within an accelerated period
- Expedite the process of federal agencies making improvements by using all administrative tools and authorities available to them, including categorical exclusions

Organizations in support of the Ranching Without Red Tape Act:

New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association
New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau
Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund
United Stockgrowers of America
Utah Farm Bureau
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Ducks Unlimited
Wyoming Farm Bureau
American Farm Bureau Federation
Wyoming Stock Growers
Wyoming Association of Conservation
Districts

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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To allow holders of certain grazing permits to make minor range improvements and to require that the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior respond to requests for range improvements within 30 days, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. VASQUEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To allow holders of certain grazing permits to make minor range improvements and to require that the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior respond to requests for range improvements within 30 days, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Ranching Without Red
5 Tape Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. MINOR RANGE IMPROVEMENTS UNDER USFS GRAZ-**
2 **ING PERMITS.**

3 (a) MINOR RANGE IMPROVEMENTS BY PERMIT-
4 TEES.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enact-
5 ment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue regulations al-
6 lowing a permittee to carry out a minor range improve-
7 ment on the lands with respect to which the permittee
8 holds a grazing permit if—

9 (1) the permittee notifies the applicable Forest
10 Service district ranger at least 30 days prior to car-
11 rying out such minor range improvement; and

12 (2) such applicable district ranger—

13 (A) approves the minor range improve-
14 ment; or

15 (B) does not respond to the minor range
16 improvement.

17 (b) RANGE IMPROVEMENTS BY THE SECRETARY.—
18 The Secretary, acting through the applicable District
19 Ranger, shall—

20 (1) respond to a covered request not later than
21 30 days after the date on which such request is sub-
22 mitted; and

23 (2) if such response confirms that the Sec-
24 retary, acting through the applicable District Rang-
25 er, will carry out the range improvement re-
26 quested—

1 (A) notify the district office that serves the
2 area in which such range improvement will
3 occur; and

4 (B) expedite the carrying out of such
5 range improvement using any available adminis-
6 trative tools or authorities, including categorical
7 exclusions.

8 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) CFR TERMS.—The terms “grazing permit”,
10 “permittee”, and “range improvement” have the
11 meanings given those terms, respectively, in section
12 222.1 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (or
13 successor regulations).

14 (2) COVERED REQUEST.—The term “covered
15 request” means a request submitted by a permittee
16 to the Secretary requesting that the Secretary carry
17 out a range improvement.

18 (3) MINOR RANGE IMPROVEMENT.—The term
19 “minor range improvement” includes improvements
20 to existing fences and fence lines, wells, water pipe-
21 lines, and stock tanks.

22 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
23 the Secretary of Agriculture.

1 **SEC. 3. MINOR RANGE IMPROVEMENTS UNDER BLM GRAZ-**
2 **ING PERMITS.**

3 (a) MINOR RANGE IMPROVEMENTS BY GRAZING
4 PERMIT HOLDERS.—Not later than 1 year after the date
5 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall issue reg-
6 ulations allowing a grazing permit or lease holder to carry
7 out a minor range improvement on the lands with respect
8 to which the grazing permit or lease applies if—

9 (1) the grazing permit or lease holder notifies
10 the applicable Bureau of Land Management district
11 or field manager at least 30 days prior to carrying
12 out such minor range improvement; and

13 (2) such applicable district or field manager—
14 (A) approves the minor range improve-
15 ment; or

16 (B) does not respond to the minor range
17 improvement.

18 (b) RANGE IMPROVEMENTS BY THE SECRETARY.—
19 The Secretary, acting through the applicable State Direc-
20 tor of the Bureau of Land Management, shall—

21 (1) respond to a covered request not later than
22 30 days after the date on which such request is sub-
23 mitted; and

24 (2) if such response confirms that the Sec-
25 retary, acting through the applicable State Director

1 of the Bureau of Land Management, will carry out
2 the range improvement requested—

3 (A) notify the State office that serves the
4 area in which such range improvement will
5 occur; and

6 (B) expedite the carrying out of such
7 range improvement using any available adminis-
8 trative tools or authorities, including categorical
9 exclusions.

10 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) COVERED REQUEST.—The term “covered
12 request” means a request submitted by a grazing
13 permit holder to the Secretary requesting that the
14 Secretary carry out a range improvement.

15 (2) GRAZING PERMIT OR LEASE.—The term
16 “grazing permit or lease” means a grazing permit or
17 lease described in section 4130.2 of title 43, Code of
18 Federal Regulations (or success regulations).

19 (3) MINOR RANGE IMPROVEMENT.—The term
20 “minor range improvement” includes improvements
21 to existing fences and fence lines, wells, water pipe-
22 lines, and stock tanks.

23 (4) RANGE IMPROVEMENT.—The term “range
24 improvement” means a range improvement carried

1 out pursuant to subpart 4120 of title 43, Code of
2 Federal Regulations (or successor regulations).

3 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of the Interior.