natural gas. Furthermore, our bill says to producers "you know better than the government what your make or break price threshold is, so if low prices are sustained your leases are suspended, at your option, not the Secretary of the Interior."

But, Mr. Speaker, its not just producers who are being squeezed by today's global oil price environment. So are the oil patch states for which their share of federal mineral receipts are critical in meeting budget priorities. For many public land states, these receipts are dedicated to education trust funds, yet since 1991 these states have had to "share" in the burden of the federal government's costs to administer the Mineral Leasing Act before receiving their half of the remaining revenue. My home state of Wyoming has had over seven million dollars annually taken from the receipts flowing into its Treasury because of this law. And, these states, until now have had no option to take over the federal government's responsibilities and perform the same tasks more cost effectively.

That will change with the Federal Oil and Gas Lease Management Improvement Act. This bill provides the opportunity to take over post-lease issuance duties from the federal Bureau of Land Management and allow the state's oil and gas conservation commission to perform those functions on federal leases within their borders, if they so choose. As an incentive to take over the job program, thereby saving federal budget outlays, volunteering states would no longer have to share in the federal administrative burden which unfairly diminishes their school funds.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues from other public land states to cosponsor this legislation and work with me toward its passage. This bill seeks the balance necessary to keep a domestic oil and gas industry working to explore and develop our public mineral resources. Without such balance, the long term decline in domestic production will continue to worsen and the royalties the taxpayers receive from such production will decline as well. Our oil patch states have shown the way this year by passing numerous severance tax reductions and other legislation designed to keep production on domestic and then the workers associated with that production paying taxes. The Federal Oil and Gas Lease Management Improvement Act of 1999 is a small step in that direction by the federal government, and I urge its adoption.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Fresno Elks Lodge as they continue in their 100th year of service. The Fresno Elks Lodge was founded May 12, 1898, and has remained true to the mission of the "Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks," dedicated to responsible and charitable interaction in their communities, and the preservation of American heritage.

Maintaining its emphasis on charity, justice, brotherly love, and fidelity, the order provides millions of dollars in charitable goods and services. It services disabled children through the Elks Major Project by offering scholarships and in-home therapies. It provides active youth programs, veterans assistance programs, community service programs, drug abuse awareness education and alternative activity programs for inner-city youth. Also, the Elks are second to the Federal Government in providing scholarships to students pursuing a college education.

During times of national crisis such as natural disasters or the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma, the Elks are among the first to respond with offers of help both in manpower and money to communities and their families.

Prized of its patriotism, the order is the first to come to the defense of its nation and flag. From building and staffing the first V.A. Hospital in the United States, to helping to restore the Statue of Liberty, Elks continue to guide America forward.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and pay tribute to the Fresno Elks Lodge #439 on occasion of its 100th year of continued service. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing the Fresno Elks Lodge continued success in their quest to uphold and improve the American community.