

# Conservationists sue over federal coal program

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Conservation groups have sued the government to force federal officials to undertake the first broad environmental review of the government's coal-leasing program in decades.

Friends of the Earth and the Western Organization of Resource Councils filed the [lawsuit](#) Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C.

It's being paid for by the philanthropic foundation of Microsoft founder Paul Allen.

Supporters of the lawsuit said there hasn't been a comprehensive review of the government's [coal](#) program since 1979. That's before climate-changing gases produced by burning coal emerged as a significant public concern.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has been reviewing its coal-leasing program since a government investigation last year revealed officials accepted below-market bids in some coal sales.

BLM spokesman Jeff Krauss declined to comment on Tuesday's lawsuit.

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