

Rep. Celeste Maloy Elected Chair of Powerful Congressional Western Caucus

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by Samuel Flitton

Utah Rep. Celeste Maloy has been elected chair of the Congressional Western Caucus, giving her one of the most consequential regional leadership roles in the U.S. House. Maloy was elected to the position following the passing of longtime chairman Rep. Doug LaMalfa of California. As the caucus's executive vice chair, she was considered by many to be next in line to lead a powerful bloc that plays a central role in shaping federal policy for the American West.

The Congressional Western Caucus is a major force in Congress, particularly on issues where Western states have unique and often disproportionate stakes. With dozens of members spanning multiple committees, the caucus helps drive legislation and oversight related to public lands, water rights, agriculture, energy development, wildfire mitigation, and federal permitting. Leadership of the caucus is not ceremonial—it carries real influence over policy direction, coordination among Western lawmakers, and engagement with federal land and resource agencies.

Maloy's elevation is especially notable given her subject-matter depth. A former public lands attorney and longtime senior aide to Rep. Chris Stewart, she brings extensive expertise in land management, regulatory policy, and Western resource issues. Her background positions her to play a meaningful role in steering caucus priorities at a time when debates over land use, water scarcity, and wildfire risk are intensifying.

For Utah, this leadership shift significantly elevates the state's influence in Washington. With so much of Utah's land under federal control, having a Utahn at the helm of the Western Caucus places Utah at the center of congressional negotiations over land management, permitting reform, and natural resource policy heading into 2026.

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