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Opening Statement by
The Honorable Doug Lamborn
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
At the Oversight Hearing On

“America’s Mineral Resources: Creating Mining and Manufacturing Jobs and Securing America,”

and

**Legislative Hearing On H.R. 1063, H.R. 687, H.R. 697, H.R. 761,
H.R. 767, H.R. 957, and H.R. 981**

I would like to welcome everyone in the room here today and listening via our webcast to the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources oversight and legislative hearing focusing on accessing the Nation’s solid mineral resources and examining our national Strategic and Critical Minerals Policy. As I’ve stated before -- our national minerals policy has been neglected for far too long. And as evidenced by the bipartisan nature of the legislation we will be considering today there is a clear recognition that as a Nation we can no longer afford to leave our domestic mineral needs or policy on the back burner.

Strategic and critical minerals are essential to our economy, livelihood and national security. Renewable energy, national defense equipment, agriculture, healthcare and everyday items such as televisions, telephones, computers and light bulbs are all dependent on minerals. Currently the United States relies on foreign sources for a majority of our non-fuel mineral materials and, according to the USGS, is 100% dependent on foreign sources for rare earth minerals.

Mining creates tangible value, introducing new money into the Nation’s economic system. Additional tangible value is added to the raw mined product through manufacturing, construction, and other uses. Harvesting domestic mineral resources contributes to local economies, and to the nation’s overall economic security from the most basic level up.

Mining and the associated businesses and industry have been one of the few growth areas during the country’s prolonged recession providing employment opportunities for skilled labor, scientist, engineers and others.

These are not your everyday run of the mill jobs but high-paying-family wage jobs with generous benefits. A recent CRS analysis shows the non-supervisory positions in the energy and minerals sector pay \$1,535 & \$1,220 per week respectively.

I'd like to point out that domestic mining isn't just about jobs in the mines, its thousands of geologists, biologists, and environmental engineers, it is about the tens of thousands of jobs in the industries that support our miners. From the Caterpillar factories in Illinois to Red Wing Boots in Minnesota, from St. Pierre Chains in Wooster, MA to Airflow Catalyst Systems in Rochester, NY.

As an added benefit – the Nation will become more self-reliant on the raw mined materials our society depends on as well as increasing opportunities for growth in our domestic manufacturing sector, and improving the Nation's economic and national security. The end result is Americans everywhere benefit from more domestic mining.

Members Panel

We have an exciting hearing before us today; we will start with a bipartisan panel of our colleagues, on both sides of the legislation before us.

Oversight Panel

The Members panel will be followed by our oversight panel that will provide testimony on "*America's Mineral Resources: Creating Mining and Manufacturing Jobs and Securing America.*" Domestic mining faces many challenges in the U.S., permitting and access being only a sliver of the numerous challenges facing mine development. However, it also holds great promise as we will hear from folks who see a bright future and opportunity.

Just as the U.S. has experienced significant growth in Oil and Natural Gas reserves and resources – mainly from private and state mineral rich lands -- there is an opportunity for significant growth in domestic non-fuel strategic and critical minerals production as well.

ADMINISTRTION PANEL

The Oversight panel will be followed by the Administration Panel that will provide testimony on the Legislation under consideration today.

Legislative Panel

Finally, we will hear from our legislative panel. With the Exception of my colleague Kevin Cramer's bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to modify the Pilot Project offices of the Federal Permit Streamlining Pilot Project to include Montana and South Dakota, the other pieces of legislation have passed out of the House Committee on Natural Resources and in some cases the floor of the House during the last Congress only to languish in the Senate.

Here I'd like to make a pitch for my legislation H.R. 1063 the "*National Strategic and Critical Minerals Policy Act of 2013,*" which I strongly believe will provide the agencies with the information they need to make better decisions for the country when it comes to the development of our non-fuel solid mineral resources.

Other important bipartisan pieces of legislation under consideration today that will not be discussed by the Members panel are:

- HR 761 the “*Critical and Strategic Minerals Production Act*” which uses the President’s Executive Order requiring coordination between agencies when permitting infrastructure projects in order to expedite construction and JOB creation as a template for permitting reform for advanced mineral exploration and mine development projects – the foundation of other more familiar Infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges – leading to JOB creation and economic and national security; and,
- HR 957 the “*American Soda Ash Competitiveness Act*” sets the federal royalty rate for soda ash at 2 percent allowing the domestic soda ash industry to remain competitive with international producers – namely China – and protects domestic JOBS in the mining, transportation and shipping sectors.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today.