



In Case You Missed It

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

THE DENVER POST



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Energy in the West key to economic recovery

The Denver Post

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By: Reps. Doug Lamborn and Scott Tipton

As many Colorado families continue to lose jobs, homes, or even hope for a brighter future, they may not realize that one key to our nation's economic recovery lies right beneath them. Colorado and our Western neighbors are home to vast energy reserves that, if tapped and developed responsibly, could fuel our nation's economic recovery. Unfortunately, the Obama administration's misguided energy policies have put much of those reserves off-limits.

We are trying to increase access to our petroleum, natural gas, critical minerals and alternative energies like wind and solar, through an all-of-the-above energy approach. This will do three things: increase energy supplies and bring down the cost of gasoline at the pump; create high-paying jobs; and increase revenues to the federal government to help pay down our enormous national debt.

One of the most obvious ways to grow our Western energy production is by eliminating excessive government regulations and encouraging environmentally responsible development. The House Natural Resources committee recently passed legislation that would help eliminate the regulatory confusion, lawsuits and permitting delays that are currently stifling wind and solar development.

Recently, the Western Energy Alliance, a Denver-based coalition of independent Western energy producers, released a comprehensive report on the impact of government regulations on Western jobs and energy production. The report shows that just six major oil and natural gas producing states in the West have the ability to help rebuild the economy and create jobs while displacing foreign imports.

The study concludes that if Western producers are allowed to develop the vast domestic energy resources found on public lands, investment in the region will double to \$58 billion annually by 2020, and direct, indirect, and induced jobs will increase by 16 percent. Included in the coalition's recommendations are:

- A thorough review and comprehensive reform of the entire federal on-shore process, including leasing, project environmental analysis, and permitting;
- A moratorium on new and expanded layers of regulation; and
- Limits to litigation that unreasonably obstruct domestic energy production and economic growth.

Earlier this year, the House Small Business Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade examined the impact that regulations on the energy industry have had on small businesses. Business owners told us that they are struggling to cope with the additional costs of energy resulting from overregulation.

We believe it is important that reasonable regulations remain in place requiring that drilling for oil and gas be done responsibly in a safe and healthful manner. And it must be done in a way that is not disruptive to the surface owners. The increased cost of new regulations should also be considered.

That's because those costs will either be absorbed by the businesses — diverting resources away from investment and expansion — or passed along to cash-strapped consumers who have already tightened their belts and cut back. In either case, they are frequently roadblocks to economic recovery and job creation.

This poses a significant challenge to small businesses, which account for 70 percent of all new jobs created in the U.S. and will be the driving force of any economic recovery. As long as the duplicative and punitive regulations remain in place that have created a de facto moratorium on oil and gas exploration and stunted the development of renewables, businesses will continue to suffer, and we will continue to remain stuck in a rut of unemployment that has remained over 8 percent for 29 consecutive months.

We will continue to work to open up energy production in Colorado and nationwide. This will get people back to work and reduce the financial stress on the families and business owners struggling to fill up their tanks and pay the bills. We will continue to seek solutions to spur on job creation and economic recovery.

Rep. Doug Lamborn, R-Colorado Springs, chairs the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals. Rep. Scott Tipton, R-Cortez, chairs the House Small Business Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade.

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