



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Members, Witnesses Agree California's Abundant Oil and Natural Gas Reserves Would Create Jobs and Increase Energy Security

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an oversight hearing on “*Energy Independence: Domestic Opportunities to Reverse California’s Growing Dependence on Foreign Oil.*” Overall, the United States is importing less oil than any point in the past decade, yet California’s foreign oil imports have dramatically increased. Today’s hearing focused on the drastic increase in foreign oil imports in California and the opportunities within the state for significant energy production.

“Now there are two common sense ways to reverse the trend towards reliance on foreign oil; the first is through reducing their demand, and California has taken sizeable steps in this direction,” said Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn (CO-05). “But the second way is through increasing domestic supply – generating more energy production and reaping the economic benefits from such development. In this area, California has failed miserably. The question before us today is choice. Does California choose domestic production or foreign imports?”

Since 2000, California has experienced a surge in foreign oil imports getting over 50 percent of its oil from foreign countries such as Saudi Arabia, Russia, Colombia, Venezuela, and Iraq. Federal lands off the coast of California contain energy reserves estimated to contain at least 9.8 billion barrels of oil and 13.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas according the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that California’s Monterey Shale contains over 15 billion barrels of oil – more than estimates of North Dakota’s Bakken Shale. Unemployment in the state currently stands at 9 percent; each gallon of foreign oil purchased is a missed job opportunity and lost revenue for the state.

Witnesses at today’s hearing highlighted the benefits of reduced imports and expanded production on the state economy, unemployment, and environment.

“The tug of war between oil and the environment, back and forth changes in offshore policy, and the more recent onslaught of proposals aimed at stopping all forms of

domestic oil and gas production under the guise of ‘anti-fracking’ policies help explain why California’s oil production continues to decline while experts believe we are sitting on unprecedented potential. Southern San Joaquin in central California is home to one of the largest untapped reserves in the world, believed to hold up to 400 billion barrels of oil. Tapping into these reserves has the potential to create up to 2.8 million jobs a year along with billions of dollars in revenue for the federal, state, and local government.” – Senator Jean Fuller, California State Senate

“Even though overall demand for oil is down, California remains the third largest consumer on the planet of gas and diesel- behind only the United States and China. In fact, 96 percent of our state’s transportation is petroleum-based, and the EIA estimates that by 2040, 80 percent of our energy will still be fossil-fuel based. Meanwhile, every barrel of oil we produce in California is a barrel that we don’t import from counties with significantly fewer environmental protections .” – David Quast, California Director, Energy in Depth

“The potential benefits of developing the projects proposed for Santa Barbara County, using existing infrastructure, as well as the oil and gas reserves in the OCS would enable Californians to see a dramatic reduction in foreign oil imports, permanently cleaner beaches, long-term funding increases for schools, substantial economic benefits and more jobs, billions in new annual revenues for the state and Santa Barbara County, and funding increases for renewable incentives.” – Alice Green, Board Member, SOS California

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