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Opening Statement of
Chairman Louie Gohmert
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

On Wednesday April 29, 2015

1334 Longworth House Office Building

Oversight Hearing: "Zero Accountability: The Consequences of Politically Driven Science."

This is the first meeting of the newly established subcommittee on oversight and investigations. First, I'd like to thank Congresswoman Dingell for her willingness to serve as ranking member and I look forward to the opportunities we will have to work together on government accountability.

This subcommittee is a reflection of Chairman Bishop's and my commitment to place a greater focus on oversight in the Natural Resources Committee. Our committee has jurisdiction over more than 100,000 employees managing over 600 million surface acres. I recognize within these bureaus are many dedicated people working on behalf of the country to see that our lands are worked and enjoyed to the maximum extent possible.

However, as we will hear today, there are also times when individuals take advantage of their position and exercise not good stewardship, but a violation of trust with the American people.

We have a great responsibility here. While the focus of our committee may only be a small fraction of the government financially speaking, the authorities we oversee have a major impact on millions of individuals across the nation. It should be our goal to see that checks are in place to address some of the abuses we will hear today.

I'd like to thank the witnesses that travelled here to inform our subcommittee about what exactly is going on at the ground level of the federal government. Some of what we are going to hear defies logic, common sense and even basic compassion. This will be an honest assessment of how the system miserably failed. There isn't any other way to describe it.

It is astounding reading this testimony how many different times the right choices could have been made. At every level a lack of accountability let the bureaucracy or even the bully win and our constituents, our friends, our neighbors, and our families paid with their livelihoods and their safety. When we could have cared for the least of these, we chose a toad instead.

For this reason our first hearing of this new subcommittee is entitled "Zero Accountability." I want it seared on the records of this Congress and on the minds of its Members exactly what happens when we leave individuals to fend for themselves against this federal government. Why else are we here if not to hold accountable those charged with executing the laws that we establish?