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# U.S. House of Representatives

## Committee on Natural Resources

Washington, DC 20515

### Opening Statement of Chairman Doc Hastings Committee on Natural Resources

On Wednesday, May 22, 2013

1324 Longworth House Office Building

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources Legislative Hearing on

H.R. 1964, H.R. 1965, H.R. 1394, and H.R. 555

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The Natural Resources Committee has frequently discussed the Congressional Research Service reports that have shown that all of the recent increase in U.S. oil and natural gas production has occurred on state and private lands – not federal lands. The lack of production is not for the lack of resources, but rather the lack of production is because of federal regulations that hinder and block development. The four bills before us today will help to reverse that trend.

Together, these bills will help us expand oil, natural gas and renewable energy production on public lands. They will streamline government red tape, break down bureaucratic hurdles and put in place a clear plan for developing our own energy resources. Even more importantly, these bills will spur job creation and help grow and strengthen our economy.

This week, AAA reported that motorists can expect another spike in gasoline prices this Memorial Day weekend. Prices have jumped 14 cents in the past month and the national average is now \$3.65. These high prices hurt families and small businesses, and weigh down our economy. But Americans shouldn't have to settle for and accept near \$4 a gallon gasoline prices. Continuing to increase our domestic supply, as these bills do, is the best way to respond to volatile price spikes.

And while our country continues to face looming deficits, it's important to remember that energy production is a revenue generator. Increasing American energy production is one of the best things we can do to ensure job creation and economic growth.

I want to take a moment to specifically touch on H.R. 1964, the *National Petroleum Reserve Alaska Access Act* that I introduced with my colleague from Alaska Rep. Don Young. Alaska is a tremendous energy asset for our nation. But the Obama Administration appears determined, against the wishes of most Alaskans, to keep their energy resources off-limits.

The NPR-A was specifically designated in 1923 as a petroleum reserve. Its expressed purpose was to supply our country with American energy. That's why it's completely unacceptable that the Obama Administration this year finalized a plan to close over half of the NPR-A to energy production. This bill would nullify that plan and require the Interior Department to produce a new plan for responsibly developing these resources.

This bill would require annual lease sales in the NPR-A and ensure that necessary roads, bridges

and pipelines needed to transport energy resources out of the NPR-A can be approved and completed in a timely, efficient manner. This is crucial to ensure that the Trans Alaskan Pipeline System (TAPS) remains full and operational.

While most of the recent focus has been on the Keystone XL pipeline, and the House will consider a bill this afternoon to approve it, we cannot forget that TAPS is one of the most important pieces of energy infrastructure in our nation. Reduced production in Alaska has left TAPS at less than half of its capacity, threatening a shutdown that would cost jobs and significantly weaken our energy security. We cannot allow that happen and developing our resources in the NPR-A is vital to ensuring that it doesn't.

President Obama cannot continue to talk about his support for all-of-the-above energy and then continue to pursue policies that actively block all types of energy production on our federal lands. 'All-of-the-above energy' needs to be more than just a politically popular sound bite.

The majority of the provisions in these bills passed the House last Congress with bipartisan support. It's time for Congress to once again move forward with these common sense, job-creating energy plans.