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**Opening Statement of**
**Chairman Doc Hastings**
**Committee on Natural Resources**
**On Wednesday, April 6, 2011 at 10:00 a.m.**
**1324 Longworth House Office Building**
**Before the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources**
**Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1229, H.R. 1230 and H.R. 1231**

Thank you Subcommittee Chairman Lamborn for holding this legislative hearing today on three bills I recently introduced to expand American energy production, create jobs and lower prices.

President Obama is traveling the country this week talking about energy. Unfortunately, in my opinion, these speeches represent more rhetoric that doesn't match the President's long record of blocking and delaying American energy production. The speeches are full of sounds bites, but lack specific plans on how to create more American energy.

Meanwhile, House Republicans are taking action. We've launched the American Energy Initiative - an effort to expand all types of American energy to create jobs and lower energy prices. The three bills we'll be discussing today are part of this Initiative.

These bills take proactive steps to expand American energy production and directly reverse Obama Administration policies that have placed our American energy resources off-limits.

H.R. 1229, the *Putting the Gulf Back to Work Act*, would end the Administration's *de facto* moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico in a safe, responsible, transparent manner by setting firm time-lines for considering permits to drill. It reforms current law by requiring the Secretary to issue a permit to drill and also requiring the Secretary to conduct a safety review.

H.R. 1230, the *Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act*, would require the Administration to move forward promptly to conduct offshore lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico and offshore Virginia that the Obama Administration has delayed or canceled.

Finally, H.R. 1231, the *Reversing President Obama's Offshore Moratorium Act*, would lift the President's ban on new offshore drilling by requiring the Administration to move forward in the 2012-2017 lease plan with energy production in areas containing the most oil and natural gas resources. The bill sets a production goal of 3 million barrels of oil per day by 2027, which would reduce foreign imports by nearly one-third.

When faced with raising gasoline prices and high unemployment, why would we not look to our own American energy resources to help provide a solution?

Why would we turn to OPEC to provide us with more energy when we have available resources here at home?

Why tell Brazil that the United States will be one of their "best customers," instead of producing our own offshore resources?

Quite frankly, I'm baffled by these Obama Administration policies.

It's unacceptable that the Obama Administration continues to slow-walk permits in the Gulf.

It's unacceptable that because of the Obama Administration, 2011 will be the first year since 1958 that there will not be a single offshore lease sale.

And it's unacceptable that the Obama Administration has single handedly placed areas in the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts off-limits to new drilling that were opened by both Congress and President Bush in 2008.

That's why it's crucial that we move forward with these bills.

I've proposed a drill smart plan – one that targets our efforts towards areas where we know we have the most oil and natural gas resources. In contrast, the Obama Administration has a drill nowhere new plan that threatens both our economy recovery and our national security.

I once again would like to emphasize that these are just the first three bills to be introduced as part of the American Energy Initiative. There will be an array of bills coming soon from this Committee that will focus on renewable energy, onshore energy, hydropower and critical minerals.

With American energy comes American jobs. I'm eager to hear from our witnesses today about how these bills to expand offshore energy production will help put employers and employees in the Gulf of Mexico back to work and create new energy jobs from coast to coast.