



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Chairman Hastings: All-of-the-Above Energy Plan will Create Jobs, Lower Energy Costs for American Families

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings delivered the following statement on the House floor today in support of H.R. 1965, *the Federal Lands Jobs and Energy Security Act*:



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“Madam Chairman, with millions of Americans still looking for work, growing debts and deficits, and energy prices that are still far too high –the United States needs to implement an all-of-the-above energy plan to responsibly harness our Nation’s energy resources on federal lands.

New energy production is one of the best ways to grow the economy and create new jobs to put people back to work. One needs to look no further for proof than to states like North Dakota that have flourishing economies and some of the lowest unemployment rates in the country due to energy production. Because of this energy boom, the U.S. is now projected to be the world leader in oil production by 2015, surpassing Saudi Arabia.

The catch is that this increased energy production is happening on private and state lands –

places that aren't as restricted by onerous federal regulations and policies. Federal lands are being left behind.

However, this lack of production on federal lands is not for lack of resources. We have tremendous potential for new onshore oil and natural gas production on federal lands, but the Obama Administration is actively and purposely keeping these resources off-limits.

Leasing and permitting delays, regulatory hurdles, and ever changing rules are a few of the reasons energy production on federal lands is in decline.

President Obama has had the four lowest years of federal acres leased for energy production going back to 1988. Under his Administration, the average time to get a drilling permit approved on federal lands is 307 days. By contrast, it takes on average only 10 days in North Dakota to get a permit approved on state land. In Colorado, it's 27 days.

It's no wonder that state lands are flourishing while federal lands are experiencing a decrease in energy production. That is unacceptable and this bill today offers real solutions to unlock the shackles that have been placed on our federal lands.

H.R. 1965, the *Federal Lands Jobs and Energy Security Act*, is a package of bills that will help us expand oil, natural gas and renewable energy production on public lands. It 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.

I want to take a moment to specifically highlight the importance of the third title in this bill – *National Petroleum Reserve Alaska Access Act*.

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.

Much focus has been given to the Keystone XL pipeline, but 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.

I urge my colleagues to support this job-creating legislation and allow our federal lands to be a part of our Nation's energy equation.

We've seen the jobs that can be created through energy production. We've seen how it can grow local communities and create thriving economies. We've seen how lower energy prices are vital to putting more money in the pockets of American families. We know what's possible, it just a matter of realizing that potential by allowing new energy production to occur on our federal lands.

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 this common sense, job-creating energy plan."

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