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TODD YOUNG
CHIEF OF STAFF

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

Opening Statement of
Chairman Doug Lamborn
House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
At the Oversight Hearing on the

“Effect of the President’s FY 2013 Budget and Legislative Proposals for the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service’s Energy and Minerals Programs on Private Sector Job Creation, Domestic Energy and Minerals Production and Deficit Reduction.”

Tuesday, March 20, 2012, at 10:00a.m.

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During today's hearing we will hear the Administration's justification for their Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service budget and legislative proposals for the federal onshore energy and minerals programs in Fiscal Year 2013. The energy and mineral programs under the jurisdiction of this subcommittee bring in the most revenue to the federal treasury behind the IRS. In addition, federal lands are a key contributor to job creation. According to the Administration's own report, more than half the jobs created by the Department's activities are related to energy and mineral production. This equates to more than 726, 000 American jobs that are dependent on the actions of this Administration. The opportunities for new job creation are endless; however, without policies in place that encourage energy and mineral development, these job opportunities are non-existent.

Today, we will hear weighty claims of actions that this Administration is supposedly taking to promote domestic energy and create American jobs. Unfortunately, since the Administration took office the Department of the Interior has taken steps to reduce access to domestic energy and mineral resources on federal lands including renewable resources like wind and solar.

Today we will likely hear from the Administration that the Agencies are working to lower gas prices for American consumers. We might also hear President Obama's claim that high gas prices are not the President's fault. However, a careful review of the President Obama's actual actions paint a very different story.

PRESIDENT'S ACTIONS

In 2009, shortly after President Obama took office, 77 leases issued in Utah were withdrawn. This cost American taxpayers millions of dollars in lost lease bids, production royalties, and the opportunity to produce American energy to offset rising imports of oil and natural gas. According to a Uintah County commissioner, this prevented the creation of approximately 3,000 jobs. Who made the decision to withdraw these leases – thereby stopping energy production and job creation? President Obama.

The Administration often touts their record of encouraging oil and natural gas development on federal lands. But since the President took office, the last 3 years have seen the fewest acres leased for oil and natural gas in over 30 years. Who makes the decision to lease, or not lease, land for energy development? President Obama.

The last three years have seen the fewest new leases sold by BLM since 1984. Who makes the decision to sell leases? President Obama.

Since the Administration took office, a moratorium on Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) production reduced production on the OCS by 500,000 barrels per day. In December 2009, EIA's Annual Energy Outlook for 2010 (AEO2010), forecast Gulf of Mexico crude oil production to average 1.76 million barrels per day. Today EIA's estimate for the 2nd quarter of 2012 is 1.26 million barrels per day. Who makes the decision to approve, delay and deny permits for energy production in the Gulf of Mexico? President Obama.

Who made the decision to entirely halt all production in the Gulf of Mexico while thousands of Americans sat, unemployed, for nearly a year? President Obama.

And who stood idly by as rigs left the Gulf of Mexico, bound for the shores of other countries while thousands of American jobs went with them? President Obama.

A robust energy and mineral industry in this country contributes billions of dollars to our economy and provides raw materials for countless products that Americans depend on every day. The economic security of our nation is directly dependent on developing our own domestic resources that we are lucky enough to have within our borders.

An effective energy and mineral program within the BLM and Forest Service is imperative for the creation of American jobs, increasing national security through our domestic energy and critical and strategic mineral resources, and increasing revenue into federal, state and local treasuries.

Unfortunately, the policies of the current Administration will not create jobs or produce American energy. In fact, President Obama's solution to rising gas prices is OPEC. Just last week President Obama asked Saudi Arabia to increase oil production to mitigate gasoline prices. Rather than facilitating our own energy production and creating jobs for Americans, President Obama would rather send American dollars to the Middle East and create jobs for the citizens of Saudi Arabia. The Administration's policies instead have and will lead to American job loss, further dependence on foreign sources for our country's energy and mineral needs and severely limit the revenue stream from the development of federal mineral resources.

I look forward to hearing from our all of today's witnesses on this important topic.