

DOC HASTINGS, WA
CHAIRMAN
DON YOUNG, AK
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TN
LOUIE GOHMERT, TX
ROB BISHOP, UT
DOUG LAMBORN, CO
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VA
PAUL C. BROUN, GA
JOHN FLEMING, LA
MIKE COFFMAN, CO
TOM MCCLINTOCK, CA
GLENN THOMPSON, PA
JEFF DENHAM, CA
DAN BENISHEK, MI
DAVID RIVERA, FL
JEFF DUNCAN, SC
SCOTT R. TIPTON, CO
PAUL A. GOSAR, AZ
RAÚL R. LABRADOR, ID
KRISTI L. NOEM, SD
STEVE SOUTHERLAND II, FL
BILL FLORES, TX
ANDY HARRIS, MD
JEFFREY M. LANDRY, LA
CHARLES J. "CHUCK" FLEISCHMANN, TN
JON RUNYAN, NJ
BILL JOHNSON, OH

TODD YOUNG
CHIEF OF STAFF

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

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MA
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER
DALE E. KILDEE, MI
PETER A. DEFazio, OR
ENI F.H. FALCOMA-VAEGA, AS
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NJ
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, CA
RUSH D. HOLT, NJ
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, AZ
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GU
JIM COSTA, CA
DAN BOREN, OK
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN, CNMI
MARTIN HEINRICH, NM
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NM
DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN, VI
JOHN P. SARBANES, MD
BETTY SUTTON, OH
NIKI TSONGAS, MA
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PR
JOHN GARAMENDI, CA
COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, HI

JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

Opening Statement of
Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn
Committee on Natural Resources

On Friday, May 13, 2011, at 10:00 a.m.

1324 Longworth House Office Building

Before the Full Natural Resources Committee

Oversight Hearing on: "American Energy Initiative: Identifying Roadblocks to Wind and Solar Energy on Public Lands and Waters, Part I"

This week the House took important action to expand American energy production by passing three bipartisan offshore drilling bills. These bills will unlock our oil and natural gas resources that have been placed off-limits by the Obama Administration, create 1.2 million jobs and reduce foreign imports by one-third.

These bills represented the first important steps, however our work on this Committee is just beginning. As Chairman Hastings has repeatedly said, there will be an array of energy bills coming from this Committee as part of House Republicans' American Energy Initiative that will focus on expanding all types of energy production – including renewable.

The Obama Administration has taken steps to increase production of both wind and solar power, and we applaud them for that. However there are still questions about the implementation of these policies and today we'll examine roadblocks to the development of wind and solar power.

Our federal lands are intended to be multiple-use lands – open to recreation, energy production and other types of job-creating activities. Yet too often we've seen attempts by Congressional Democrats and the Obama Administration to place our public lands off-limits to any type of economic activity. This costs jobs and blocks crucial American energy production.

The United States has some of the most promising areas, especially in the West, for solar energy development. The Obama Administration claims solar energy production is one of its highest priorities, yet only a tiny fraction of public land is even being considered for opening and almost nothing has actually been made available.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has created 24 "solar energy zones" on public lands in six Western states. However, of the 120 million acres of BLM land in these states, only 674,400 acres have been identified by the Administration as proposed solar energy zones. This means that the Interior Department is offering less than 1 percent of this land for streamlined solar energy production.

Access to public lands is not the only hurdle facing renewable energy projects. Regulatory confusion, lawsuits and permitting delays are also stifling wind and solar development. For example:

- Portions of BrightSource Energy's solar project in California were halted by the BLM over last minute concerns regarding tortoises. This suspension of the project came after the company had already invested millions of dollars and had gone through the required permitting process.
- In 2010, BLM issued new policy requiring approval from the Fish and Wildlife Service on specific plans for addressing eagles. This sudden change in policy resulted in significant delays to numerous wind projects and the wind industry estimated that this rule cost \$68 billion in wind power investment.
- The Obama Administration has launched a "Smart from the Start" wind energy initiative for federal waters in the Atlantic. As part of this initiative, the Department issued a Request for Interest on the potential for wind development in an area located off of Massachusetts. Despite receiving 11 submissions from 10 companies expressing interest in leasing this area, the Administration decided to reduce the area size by half.

These are all examples of what appear to be unnecessary roadblocks to renewable energy production.

If changes need to be made to ensure these projects are more than just talk and actually become reality, the Natural Resources Committee is prepared to act. It quite frankly boggles the mind that some of the biggest so-called proponents of renewable energy are often the exact same people filing lawsuits blocking renewable development.

Steps should be taken to reduce the regulatory uncertainty, expedite the permitting process and remove roadblocks in order to quickly and efficiently expand the development of energy projects on public lands.

I want to thank Director Michael Bromwich and Director Bob Abbey for taking the time to be here today. I look forward to your testimony and exploring ways we can work together to overcome obstacles to renewable energy production on federal lands.