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

Opening Statement of
Chairman Doug Lamborn
Before the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee
Legislative Hearing on:
H.R. 2150, the "National Petroleum Reserve Alaska Access Act"
Thursday, June 16, 2011 10:00 a.m.

As Prepared For Delivery

Today's hearing is on H.R. 2150, the "National Petroleum Reserve Alaska Access Act" but the real subject of today's hearing is jobs and energy security. Two weeks ago the Subcommittee examined the tremendous promise that Alaska holds in resources, infrastructure and people.

But that is just the start, onshore there are potentially an additional 14 billion barrels just waiting for development. Currently in Alaska alone, the oil and natural gas industry supports over 43,000 American jobs and comprises 16% of the state's wealth. Today we will hear directly from a representative of thousands of those workers who will join with us in the call for more development in NPR-A.

We will also hear from representatives of the State of Alaska talking about the importance of development in NPR-A for the state and the security of the Trans Alaska Pipeline. In addition, we will hear from a representative from the refinery association discussing the important role Alaskan oil plays in allowing Pacific Coast refiners to produce and provide essential fuel that American consumers rely on every day.

We will also hear from the Administration. However, we will likely not hear about how development in the NPR-A has been stymied by the inability of the Department of the Interior, the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA to process permits for the pipelines and roads necessary to transport the petroleum out of the petroleum reserve. There is no doubt that the development of NPR-A has been stopped because of problems within this Administration, and problems that the President could fix.

We won't hear the Administration admit that in 2010 it issued the fewest leases for oil and natural gas development since 1984. In issuing only 1,308 leases last year, one fifth of those leases were issued in Nevada, this administration has shown that leasing for oil and gas is clearly not their priority.

In fact, the second year of the Obama Administration resulted in only one quarter the number of new leases as 1994 - the second year of the Clinton Administration where they issued 4,159 leases, and about half the number of leases of the Bush Administration in 2002 who issued 2,384 leases.

This lack of leasing includes NOT ISSUING A SINGLE LEASE IN THE STATE OF ALASKA IN 2010. Last month in his Saturday Presidential Address, President Obama announced his intention to hold annual lease sales in NPR-A. I am glad that he has reversed that policy of his Administration and I anxiously await his Administration following through with these plans. The bill before us today will require the Department to ensure annual lease sale offerings.

It has often been said before this subcommittee that our nation doesn't have a lack of resources to curb our foreign dependence, we have a lack of clear policy. This Administration has shown that through their actions they do have a clear policy. It is a policy of limiting oil and natural gas development, halting job creation, and weakening our national security.

It can and should be the policy of this government to develop the resources in our National Petroleum Reserve, quickly, efficiently, and responsibly in order to reduce our foreign dependence, create jobs and keep our revenue here at home. The legislation before this Committee today will accomplish all those goals.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here today and look forward to hearing your testimony.