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

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**Opening Statement of**  
**Chairman Doug Lamborn**  
**Before the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee**  
**Oversight Hearing on:**  
***"Challenges facing Domestic Oil and Gas Development: Review of Bureau of Land***  
***Management/U.S. Forest Service Ban on Horizontal Drilling on Federal Lands."***  
**Friday, July 8, 2011**

Today the Subcommittee is meeting to review the future of oil and gas development on federal lands in light of Administration proposals to enact complete bans on horizontal drilling on federal lands.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Forest Service George Washington National Forest released a forest plan that had the Administration's preferred alternative as a ban horizontal drilling on more than 1 million acres of federal mineral estate. This plan as proposed by the Administration would essentially close the entire resource to energy development, eliminate a key priority in the multiple use missions of forest service lands, and further erode our efforts to generate domestic energy security.

While efforts are proposed by the Forest Service to close these acres to domestic development of our own natural gas, the Cove Point LNG terminal operated by Dominion purchased nearly 9 million cubic feet of Norwegian natural gas THIS YEAR. Let me repeat that, while our Forest Service is working to close our lands to all drilling, we are importing natural gas from Norway to meet the domestic needs of Virginia and Maryland.

While the Forest Service is pursuing a ban on fracturing and horizontal drilling, BLM is in the process of holding hearings in the West to review the policies for the use of fracturing on federal lands. BLM Director Abbey was quoted earlier this year saying, "'We have not seen evidence of any adverse effects as a result of the use of the chemicals that are a part of that fracking technology."

This is important because a 2009 BLM instruction memorandum says: the "Application of directional/horizontal drilling technology is increasing. The BLM strongly supports this environmental Best Management Practice as a means of providing substantial reductions in surface disturbance and overall impacts from oil and gas development."

BLM says horizontal drilling is an "environmental Best Management Practice" and there is "no evidence of any adverse effects", and yet the policy of this Administration now appears to be an outright ban starting with 1.1 million acres in Virginia.

The key questions for the Committee today is how did this policy proposal from the Forest Service reach this point? How did our land managers determine that the best policy is an outright ban on development and what does this portend for the future?

Americans are desperate for new jobs and it makes little sense to ban domestic development here, while we continue a dependence on Norwegian natural gas. The Forest Service as a custodian of our lands has an obligation to work with a multiple use mission, to serve the people of Virginia and the United States by promoting the conservation of our resources, which undeniably includes the development of appropriate oil and gas resources on Forest Lands.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today.