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U.S. House of Representatives
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Opening Statement of
Chairman Doug Lamborn
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
On Friday, January 10th at 9:30AM
1324 Longworth House Office Building Full Committee Oversight Hearing on
"The Science behind Discovery: Seismic Exploration and the Future of the Atlantic OCS"

As we begin today's hearing, I wanted to make sure that everyone was clear about the focus of this hearing - particularly in light of the recent discussions related to crude oil exports.

While America is in the beginning of a new energy renaissance, this Committee has continued to focus on the fact that this resurgence has taken place primarily on state and private lands. Meanwhile, the potential jobs and domestic production from federal land has been actively stifled by this Administration. If America wants to continue to reap the economic rewards of increased oil and natural gas production we must eliminate the red tape and barriers that continue to lock up the vast resources of our federal lands and waters.

However, the topic of crude oil exports has become an important discussion point, especially this past week. I think we all need to keep in mind that each day, while the Obama Administration continues to hold hostage our domestic resources, America imports nearly seven and a half million barrels of oil from Arab Sheiks and Latin Dictators. This amounts to nearly \$1 billion American dollars each day flowing from the pockets of every day Americans to petrol dictators and enemies of America who fund terrorists around the world.

We have a choice, we can stop buying their oil by producing more here at home, something I support and something this Administration has steadfastly opposed at every step.

Let me be clear, I support free trade. I also support American energy independence and that is a road that we are on, but we are still far from our goal. As long as the Administration continues to stifle our domestic development on federal lands our fight to create jobs and open our resources must be at the center of our efforts.

As long as American's hard earned dollars are funding terrorists and petrol dictators we must fight to open and develop our domestic resources - and that fight is not over. I

hope the day will come where we can discuss oil exports, but as long as 85% of our OCS remains closed by the Administration, as long as less than 2% of our federal onshore mineral estate is available for leasing, as long as the Administration drives out research and development investment in domestic oil shale, those discussions are premature. Our focus should remain on creating American jobs and producing American resources for American consumers.

This hearing today is a central focus of that agenda. A clear understanding of the resources in the Atlantic Ocean will help us know what areas we should develop and what resources America holds in our OCS. However, although the process of developing the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement or PEIS for seismic started in 2009, the Obama Administration has actively dragged their feet. Now as we start 2014, we are just one year from the start of the development of the 2017-2022 five year plan. One year from needing the data this PEIS is supposed to help us secure, yet the development is being stifled by the Administration. If we hope to see the Atlantic included in the next 5 year plan, the Administration must move forward quickly.

In decision making, I think we can all agree that decisions, especially those which will greatly impact our nation's future, must be made with the best available data. In the case of the Atlantic OCS, the best available data cannot yet be procured because we await a final record of decision from the Department of the Interior. Nearly 5 years ago to the day, January 21, 2009, the DOI issued the initial notice of intent to prepare the PEIS in order to enable permitting seismic activity in the Atlantic. Dr. Cruickshank likely will recall the issuance of this notice as he was with the Department at the time. When it takes our allies to the North only six months to issue a seismic permit, the obvious question remains: 5-years AND COUNTING, when will the U.S. Atlantic finally allow this activity?

I fully expect that some of my colleagues on the minority side will likely decry seismic research because, much like our President, they do not wish to see new energy development in the U.S. OCS outside of the Gulf of Mexico. But I would remind them that today's hearing is focused primarily on sound science and progress. The technology behind seismic surveying has come a long way from the technology employed in the late 70s and early 80s – when it was last conducted in the Atlantic. In an increasingly competitive global market, where allies like Canada and Mexico have made recent announcements about increasing their offshore oil and gas production, we need to know that the agencies that oversee our OCS operations are doing their jobs efficiently and spending taxpayer dollars wisely. We need to know that our country is maintaining its competitive edge and attracting economic development and the thousands of jobs that come with it. A recent study estimates that offshore energy development in the Atlantic alone could generate 280,000 jobs, \$24 billion per year to the economy, and 1.3 million barrels of oil and natural gas production per day.

What I hope to find today is that we are not spending millions of taxpayer dollars and countless years to stand in the way of permitting cutting edge, safe technology which is already employed in the Gulf of Mexico and the Canadian Atlantic to simply determine what kind of resources are contained in the Mid and South Atlantic OCS Planning Areas – which are the only areas that the PEIS covers. This information is of fundamental importance as

this Congress and this Administration make decisions going forward – and I cannot imagine a single soul that would choose ignorance over scientific discovery.