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**Testimony on “Natural Gas—America’s New Energy Opportunity:
Creating Jobs, Energy and Community Growth”
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Eastern Ohio is quickly becoming a national hub for the continued growth and development of the shale industry.

Recent studies have indicated the Utica and Marcellus shale industry could help create and support more than 200,000 jobs from now until 2015. Ohio could experience an overall wage and personal income boost of \$12 billion by 2015 from industry spending.

Additionally, royalty payments to landowners, schools, business and communities could increase to as much as \$1.6 billion by 2015. Total tax revenue from oil and gas exploration and development in the Utica shale formation from now until 2015 is projected to be roughly \$479 billion. Industry expenditures related to Utica shale development could generate approximately \$12.3 billion in gross state product and result in a statewide output or sales of more than \$23 billion.

The data speaks directly to the name of this hearing: creating jobs and community growth.” This area of Ohio has been given great geological gifts and the economic potential is tremendous.

The area you are visiting today has a very rich history. It once was a strong steel-making area. It also benefitted from years of activating related to the mining of coal. Since the well-documented struggles of the steel industry began, this area and its hard-working people have suffered. The thousands of good-paying jobs that once were available have disappeared.

Thus, the shale industry represents a major opportunity for Jefferson and surrounding counties. Some have labeled it “a once in a century opportunity.” The jobs expected to be created will impact generations of local residents.

Already, thanks to the shale industry, we have seen new wealth created in our area thanks to royalty payments. The local unemployment rate fell nearly 2 percent from 2010 to 2011 thanks to new employment opportunities.

Progress Alliance, I would point out, is the public-private economic development organization serving Jefferson County. We are, I am proud to say, a true public-private partnership. Our funding comes from both government and private businesses. The mission of Progress Alliance is three-fold in nature: attract new jobs to Jefferson County, work to retain those already here

and provide assistance when existing companies look to expand; and market Jefferson County as a great place to live, work and play.

In recent months, the activity level for the Progress Alliance staff has hit a record level. We either have or are working with more than 35 companies looking to move here as part of the shale experience. Each prospect tell us the same thing: the company wants to support existing local businesses and hire local workers.

We are experiencing a time like never before. Job-creating prospects are stopping by on a regular basis, looking for land or a building to establish a local operation.

You also need to understand that Jefferson County has taken many steps to prepare itself for what lies ahead. Our county commissioners have formed an oil and gas committee designed to address issues related to communication and education. Eastern Gateway Community College is providing training to our workforce. Our Community Action Commission has developed informational workshops designed to prepare potential workers.

Also, the county is working to improve its service, including the possible extension of the runway at the Jefferson County Airpark and the installation of an Automated Weather Observation System.

My goal today is help you understand that the shale industry represents a major opportunity to help this area of Ohio recover and move forward. Truly, this new energy opportunity does indeed represent an opportunity to create jobs and allow communities to grow.

Those of living inside this play and those outside all must understand the opportunity we have. To not totally pursue this opportunity together, to over-regulate this opportunity and to miss this opportunity would be a major, major mistake.