



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, February 27, 2014
[Permalink](#)

CONTACT: [Press Office](#)
202-226-9019

Obama Administration Lackadaisical Regarding Hiring and Retention Challenges with Key Oil and Natural Gas Jobs

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Thursday, February 27th, 2014 the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held an [oversight hearing](#) on “*Obama Administration Oversight: GAO Report – Interior Hiring and Retention Challenges.*” In a recent report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), key positions within the Department of the Interior that manage and oversee oil and natural gas activities still face high rates of attrition, extended vacancies, and delays in hiring.

The Department of the Interior is not using all available tools to correct their problem with hiring and retention of staff to manage and oversee oil and natural gas activities. It is simply not a priority for the Department of the Interior and the Obama Administration is keeping dependable, highly skilled, and well-paying jobs vacant.

“If the Obama Administration was serious about oil and natural gas production and safety these challenges with hiring and retention would not still be an issue,” said **Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn (CO-05)**. *“Having the right staff with the appropriate experience and technical background is crucial for the management, regulation, and safety of the federal oil and gas programs at Interior. Congress has taken action to address the salary disparity in FYU 2012 and 2013, now it is time for Interior to act.”*

At this hearing, [Frank Rusco](#), **Director of Natural Resources and Environment**, at the Government Accountability Office testified on the January report by the GAO which highlighted the extent to which the Department of the Interior continues to face challenges hiring and retaining key staff, the causes of these challenges, the failure of the Department of the Interior to address these challenges, and the effect on oversight of federal oil and natural gas production.

“We found that hiring and retention problems were the most acute in areas where industry activity is greatest, such as the Bakken shale play in western North Dakota, because the government is competing there with industry for the same group of geologists and petroleum engineers.”

“Interior and its three bureaus - BLM, BOEM, and BSEE - have taken some steps to address hiring and retention challenges but could do more. Interior has used special salary rates and

incentive programs to increase hiring and retention of key oil and gas positions, but use of these incentives has been limited.”

“BSEE officials told us that fewer or less-thorough inspections may mean that some offices are less able to ensure operation compliance with applicable laws and regulations and, as a result, there is an increased risk to human health and safety due to a spill or incident.”

To read the full GAO report, [click here](#).

###

NaturalResources.house.gov

