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

**Opening Statement by Ranking Member Doc Hastings**  
**Before the March 5, 2009 Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources**  
**Oversight hearing on Energy Outlooks**

JAMES H. ZOIA  
CHIEF OF STAFF

I want to thank the Chairman for holding this hearing so we can examine the energy outlook for our nation. There are certainly two front-page issues that have a significant impact on our nation's energy outlook. One is the production of more American-made energy both offshore and on federal lands. There's no question that the creation of more energy in our nation will help create new jobs and make us more secure by lowering our dependence on foreign oil.

The development of our OCS resources is critically important to both our energy future and our economic future. While we are discussing possible future development, later this month the Department of Interior will conduct a lease sale in what is believed to be one of America's best untapped areas, the 181 South Area of the Gulf of Mexico.

Today, I lead a number of my colleagues in sending a letter to Secretary Salazar stressing the importance of moving forward with this critical lease sale. The Secretary's recent actions: revoking leases in Utah, reinstating the moratoria on the OCS by delaying the 5-year plan, and stopping oil shale research in its tracks, show a clear trend against oil and gas development and job creation. My colleagues and I are concerned that should the Department act to delay the Central Gulf Oil and Gas Lease Sale 208, it will further establish a dangerous trend of blocking new American-made energy and the creation of new American jobs. Additionally, a delay of this sale would throw obstacles in the way of providing American oil and gas that the Energy Information Administration says the Nation will need well past 2030 and also discourage energy companies from pursuing new opportunities in our country.

And the other front-page issue affecting our nation's energy outlook is the cap-and-trade tax plan proposed by President Obama in his budget from last Thursday. At the conservative estimate included in the budget, this is a 646 billion dollar cost being imposed on our economy and on anyone who uses energy, from families to schools to hospitals to factories to farmers.

When you boil it right down, what a cap-and-trade tax means is that the federal government is going to purposefully increase energy prices.

In these difficult economic times, we need to keep a focus on growing our economy, not imposing tax schemes that will drive up the cost of energy for all Americans and push our economy further in the wrong direction.

I know that EIA has extensively examined the impacts that cap-and-trade programs will have on our economy and I look forward to listening and learning from the Administrator and the other witnesses.

Thank you.