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

**Opening Statement of  
Chairman Doc Hastings**

**Committee on Natural Resources**

**On Thursday, March 17, 2011, at 10:00 a.m.**

**1324 Longworth House Office Building**

**Before the Full Natural Resources Committee**

***Oversight Hearing on: "Harnessing American Resources to Create Jobs and Address Rising Gasoline Prices: Domestic Resources and Economic Impacts"***

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Every American is feeling the pain from rising gasoline prices. There's no escaping it.

It costs more to drive to work, costs more to run errands, and costs more to take the kids to school. Even those who don't own a car end up paying more for groceries and other goods because of transportation costs to get products to market.

The Natural Resources Committee has jurisdiction over all federal lands – both onshore and offshore. This is where the majority of America's energy reserves are located and also where the Obama Administration has done the most to block American energy production.

The purpose of today's hearing is to examine how to harness these energy resources on federal lands to help create jobs and address rising gasoline prices.

A recent report from the Congressional Research Service detailed just how large our energy reserves are in the United States. Our combined recoverable oil, natural gas, and coal resources total 1.3 trillion barrels of oil equivalent – the largest in the world. More than Saudi Arabia, China and Iran.

And this figure doesn't even account for our vast oil shale reserves in the West, which the U.S. Geological Survey estimates could be greater than 1.5 trillion barrels of oil.

The best way for the United States to insulate ourselves long-term from unpredictable world events and rising gasoline prices is to produce more American energy here at home.

We have the resources to produce our own energy and we have the best and latest technology to accomplish it safely. But, for some baffling reason this Administration is choosing not to do so.

Since the President's earliest days in office, his Administration has blocked, delayed, hindered and obstructed energy production across America – from coast to coast, onshore and offshore, and all the way up to Alaska.

This Administration has canceled lease sales in Utah, delayed oil shale production in Colorado, imposed a *de facto* moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico, blocked both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts from offshore energy production, retroactively withdrew a permit for a coal mine in West Virginia, blocked energy production on tribal lands throughout the country and impeded both onshore and offshore production in Alaska. The list goes on and on....

All of these actions cost American jobs and lead to higher gasoline and energy prices.

The President and the White House have been telling a very different story. But their rhetoric doesn't match reality.

The White House has even been touting statistics on increased U.S. oil production. But they are trying to claim credit for actions that took place long before President Obama took office. An increase in oil production today is the result of the pro-energy policies of previous Administrations, not this one.

The Obama Administration's energy policies are moving us backwards. This is why future projections show a decline in U.S. production and an increase in imports.

The Energy Information Administration's projections show total U.S. crude oil production declining by 110 thousand barrels per day in 2011 and 130 thousand barrels per day in 2012.

Less production, higher gasoline prices, jobs being shipped overseas and deeper dependence on foreign countries – those are the real results of the Obama Administration's energy policies.

I'm a firm believer in expanding all types of American energy – everything from solar and wind, to hydropower and biomass. However, oil, natural gas and coal are integral parts of our daily lives and are used for far more than just fuel and transportation. They enable millions of Americans to heat their homes in winter. They are essential ingredients in producing plastics, tires, farm fertilizers, computers and other high-tech devices. Even the Blackberries and iPhones that Members and staff can never seem to put down belong in this category.

I announced yesterday my intention to introduce bills that will help produce more American energy by putting people in the Gulf back to work and reversing the President's offshore drilling ban.

These will be the first of several bills. We are working on an array of specific proposals that will be introduced as part of the American Energy Initiative.

So, it all comes down to one very simple choice: Do we want to produce our energy here in America and create American jobs in the process, or do we want to jeopardize our national security by deepening our reliance on foreign countries for energy? The answer is not a difficult one.