

DOC HASTINGS, WA
CHAIRMAN
DON YOUNG, AK
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TN
LOUIE GOHMERT, TX
ROB BISHOP, UT
DOUG LAMBORN, CO
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VA
PAUL C. BROUN, GA
JOHN FLEMING, LA
MIKE COFFMAN, CO
TOM McCLINTOCK, CA
GLENN THOMPSON, PA
JEFF DENHAM, CA
DAN BENISHEK, MI
DAVID RIVERA, FL
JEFF DUNCAN, SC
SCOTT R. TIPTON, CO
PAUL A. GOSAR, AZ
RAÚL R. LABRADOR, ID
KRISTI L. NOEM, SD
STEVE SOUTHERLAND II, FL
BILL FLORES, TX
ANDY HARRIS, MD
JEFFREY M. LANDRY, LA
JON RUNYAN, NJ
BILL JOHNSON, OH
MARK AMODEI, NV

TODD YOUNG
CHIEF OF STAFF

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

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MA
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER
DALE E. KILDEE, MI
PETER A. DeFAZIO, OR
ENI F.H. FALCOMAVAEGA, AS
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NJ
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, CA
RUSH D. HOLT, NJ
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, AZ
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GU
JIM COSTA, CA
DAN BOREN, OK
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN, CNMI
MARTIN HEINRICH, NM
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NM
JOHN P. SARBANES, MD
BETTY SUTTON, OH
NIKI TSONGAS, MA
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PR
JOHN GARAMENDI, CA
COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, HI
PAUL TONKO, NY

JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

Opening Statement of
Chairman Doc Hastings
House Committee on Natural Resources
Before the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
Oversight Hearing on
“Obama Administration’s Actions Against the Spruce Coal Mine: Canceled Permits, Lawsuits
and Lost Jobs”
On Friday, June 1, 2012

There is no question that over the course of President Obama’s term in office, he and his Administration have taken aim at shutting down coal production and coal fired electricity plants across the country. These direct attacks on America’s hardworking coal families have threatened tens of thousands of jobs and promise to increase the cost of energy for millions of Americans at a time when they can least afford it.

While some of the Administration’s actions against coal mining have been deliberately slow to develop, such as the unnecessary rewrite of a coal regulation known as the Stream Buffer Zone Rule, others have been more bold and direct. The Obama Administration’s EPA’s decision to retroactively withdraw a previously issued permit was certainly a bold and direct assault on American coal production.

In fact, a Federal Court ruled that the EPA “exceeded its authority” under the Clean Water Act to revoke an already issued coal permit and that such an action required “magical thinking.” Yet, even after such a strong rebuke of the EPA’s reckless decision making, the Obama Administration is appealing the judge’s ruling and once again trying to inflict economic damage on an already struggling region.

The Spruce Coal Mine in Logan County West Virginia is a great opportunity for coal mining families who are desperate for job creation. It’s also an opportunity for more American energy production that will help support other American industries, small businesses, family farms and jobs creators through affordable energy. Unfortunately, the Obama Administration has tried at every turn to take this opportunity away from these hardworking American families.

This hearing was supposed to give Committee Members an opportunity to question Obama Administration officials about the “magical thinking” and better understand their decision making process. Unfortunately, the Obama Administration officials that were invited to testify refused the invitation and refused to send anyone in their place. We’ve heard a lot about openness and transparency from President Obama, so it’s very disappointing to see high ranking officials, or any officials, from his Administration ignore the opportunity to keep the public informed.

I would like to thank our second panel for taking the time out of their lives and busy schedules to be here today to answer questions about this important topic—I only wish the Obama Administration had shown the same courtesy.