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Opening Statement of
Chairman Doc Hastings
Committee on Natural Resources

On Tuesday, April 29th, 2014

1324 Longworth House Office Building

Full Committee Oversight Hearing on: "American Energy Jobs: Opportunities for Skilled Trades Workers"

"This year, Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee Chairman Doug Lamborn has been holding a series of hearings to examine the numerous job opportunities in the American energy sector. Today, the Full Committee will continue that effort by specifically looking at opportunities for skilled trades workers.

The recent increase in U.S. energy production is good for American jobs and our economy. However, it's unfortunate that this increase is entirely taking place on private and state lands and not federal lands. Energy production on federal lands is, in fact, languishing, instead of booming. A report released last week by the Congressional Research Service found that under the Obama Administration, oil production on federal lands fell by 11 percent, and natural gas production fell by a staggering 28 percent. This is a missed opportunity.

This Committee has long carried the banner that we can and should do more to facilitate increased production on federal lands and the House has passed several energy bills to do so. But until the Senate decides to act, we will have to thank states like Texas and North Dakota for their booming production on state and private lands.

There is no denying that American energy production is a significant job creator. According to a study by Mark Mills at the Manhattan Institute, roughly one million American workers have jobs directly in the energy industry, and a total of 10 million Americans have jobs related to this booming industry. And these numbers are growing.

Skilled trades jobs are intrinsically tied to the energy industry – and are an integral piece of this growing workforce. Perhaps most fascinating about jobs in this industry is that they are very well paying and very often times do not require a traditional 4-year degree. For instance, the Wall Street Journal most recently ran a piece on welders working for Pioneer Pipe in the Utica and Marcellus shale area of Ohio making upwards of \$150,000 to \$200,000.

While there are some who would wish to elevate green jobs over all other jobs and most

especially over oil and natural gas jobs, I would remind them that this Committee advocates an all-of-the-above energy strategy and supports all jobs that go with American energy production. We do not think lesser of these jobs simply because they are pipeline construction jobs versus windmill construction jobs.

These skilled trades jobs are a living example of how this American energy boom is helping to make life work for millions of American families from coast to coast – and by doing so, these individuals are pulling our nation out of a recession while also increasing our national security. I don't know many jobs that are as rewarding as that.

In introducing our panel today, I want to welcome Mr. Mike Rowe, the CEO of the mikeroweWORKS Foundation that serves as a Trade Resource Center for people seeking employment opportunities in the skilled trades. In his career, Mr. Rowe has worked nearly every "dirty job" in America and served as the voice to America's most dangerous fishing fleet. The show "Dirty Jobs" was an amazing display of the variety and diverse opportunity of jobs available in America for those willing to work hard and learn the necessary skills. Through the mikeroweWORKS Foundation, Mr. Rowe has worked to challenge the stigmas and stereotypes that surround "alternative education," and serve as one of the most visible and vocal advocates for millions of available jobs that require a "hands-on" skill.

We are also joined by Mr. Sean McGarvey, President of the North America's Building Trades Unions, an organization that knows something about hard work and building things in America. Mr. McGarvey is also the Co-Chair of the Oil and Natural Gas Industry Labor-Management Committee - a unique partnership between America's Building Trades Unions and the American Petroleum Institute (API) and we look forward to hearing his thoughts today.

Additionally we have Robert Flurer, the Vice President of Skeels Electric Company that is currently helping to meet the electrical needs of several energy-related ventures in North Dakota, as well as Monica Martinez, the President of Hispanics in Energy.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for coming today and I look forward to their testimony."

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