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

**Opening Statement of**  
**Chairman Doug Lamborn**  
**Before the Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee**  
**Legislative Hearing on:**  
**HR 2170, HR 2171, HR 2172, and HR 2173**  
**June 23, 2011**

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Today the Subcommittee is considering a package of bills designed to make building renewable energy projects easier on federal lands. Last month, the Committee heard from a host of renewable energy advocates that one of the most important changes that could be made to help them advance new electrical power generation is to help provide certainty in the process of permitting projects.

This comes as no surprise to those who follow energy development on federal lands. Time and time again we see massive delays in projects. It doesn't matter if the project is a Navajo owned coal plant, offshore drilling by Shell, or a wind project in Nantucket sound. Federal rules, regulations and bureaucratic red tape slow, stall or sometimes directly destroy critical projects. It can easily be said that these projects are "not as shovel-ready as expected."

Just this week news articles were highlighting the President's announcement from last October where he declared, just like President Carter, he would put solar panels on the White House roof in the spring. Surprising to only the environmental groups that supported this decision, spring has come and gone, and yet the White House has yet to move forward with installing panels. The reality is that government red tape, frivolous lawsuits and bureaucratic bungling slow or stop domestic energy projects.

President Clinton writing earlier this week made this exact point, he said and I quote, "don't blame the people in the White House for problems in getting shovel-ready projects off the ground; sometimes it takes three years or more for the approval process. We should try to change this: keep the full review process when there are real environmental concerns, but when there aren't, the federal government should be able to give a waiver to the states to speed up start times on construction projects."

I know that this may come as a shock, but I agree with President Clinton on this, we need to streamline projects. But this effort isn't just about the President's failed stimulus package.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce published a recent study titled, Progress Denied: The Potential Economic Impact of Permitting Challenges Facing Proposed Energy Projects. This study, which I will submit for the record today, had a number of critical findings to it. Of the 351 projects that they examined the study found that building those projects that were stalled, and I quote, "could produce a \$1.1 trillion short-term boost to the economy and create 1.9 million jobs annually. Moreover, these

facilities, once constructed, continue to generate jobs once built, because they operate for years or even decades. Based on their analysis, Pociask and Fuhr estimate that, in aggregate, each year the operation of these projects could generate \$145 billion in economic benefits and involve 791,000 jobs.”

Let me state that again, a trillion dollar boost to our economy and nearly 2 million jobs.

The four bills we are considering today are small steps towards achieving our goal of making renewable energy projects a reality on our federal lands. The development of renewable energy on federal lands holds great promise, while at the same time offering us tremendous opportunity for job creation and domestic energy security.

It has come as no surprise that there are critics of these bills. Groups with names like the “Wildlands Project,” “Center for Biological Diversity,” the “Sierra Club” and other similar organizations who claim they support renewable energy, but in reality believe that energy production and federal lands are incompatible. Groups who challenge traditional and renewable energy projects every step of the way with protests and frivolous lawsuits that can add years to the permitting and construction process. And as we heard at our last hearing -- years more in planning can be the death of renewable energy projects and a huge blow to implementing a national strategy of all of the above energy critical to America’s future.

Americans are desperate for new jobs and our construction industry has been particularly hard hit by the economic downturn. This package of bills will help streamline the process, give developers more certainty over their timelines, facilitate construction projects, and put more Americans back to work.