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Experts Express Need for Onshore Energy and Mining Bills to Create Jobs, Streamline Government Inefficiencies

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a legislative hearing on several onshore energy and mining bills that would streamline government processes to lower gasoline prices, create jobs, and increase American energy and critical mineral production.

"The focus today is onshore energy development. Unfortunately, the onshore impacts of this Administration's policies have been devastating. We have seen an exodus of activity in the West as companies leave federal land due to permitting and regulatory delays," **said Subcommittee Chairman Lamborn.** *"Today, we will hear testimony on bills that will actually 'do something' to reverse the real record of this Administration and expand oil, natural gas, and renewable energy development."*

Jack R. Ekstrom, Vice President, Government and Corporate Relations at Whiting Petroleum Corporation, highlighted the stark contrast between federal government and state onshore permitting, *"The average time to receive an approved Federal drilling permit is 298 days. On average we receive an approved drilling permit from the North Dakota Industrial Commission in less than 40 days."* While North Dakota is enjoy a tremendous oil boom, Ekstrom said that would not be possible if the federal government owned more land in North Dakota, *"If the Bakken [North Dakota's shale oil play] were largely on federal lands, most producers would be tied up somewhere in the federal process, production would be considerably lower, and North Dakota would not be enjoying 3% unemployment and a billion dollar budget surplus."* Finally, Ekstrom endorsed the three onshore energy bills and reminded the Committee of the tremendous potential of developing federal energy resources, *"the prosperity, the jobs, the harvest of domestic resources…can only be realized to their potential by mandating the Department of the Interior planning to encourage development, providing leasing certainty and streamlining oil and gas permitting…"*

Kathleen Sgamma, Vice President of Government & Public Affairs for the Western Energy Alliance, told the Committee about the mounting difficulties for producing energy on federal lands, "*…ever-increasing government regulations and process are making it extremely difficult and cost prohibitive*." Sgamma added that, "*It is a challenge to navigate this process, as companies are dependent on the federal government for completing certain key actions and approvals.*" However, Sgamma said that three of the bills being discussed today could help improve that situation and, "*contain commonsense provisions to clear some of the bureaucratic hurdles in the federal onshore process and encourage domestic energy* *production*."

Hall Quinn, President and CEO of the National Mining Association, testified in favor of the Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act, and said that the legislation, *"tackles one of the highest hurdles for domestic mining: permit delays."* Quinn told the Committee about the consequences of permitting delays, *"necessary government authorizations now take close to 10 years to secure, resulting in decreased competitiveness and increased reliance on foreign sources of minerals."* Finally, Quinn talked about the job creation and national security implications of increased dependence on foreign minerals, *"In a world in which the competition for mineral resources is increasingly fierce, America can no longer afford to benignly neglect a permitting process that stalls investment…We need assertive measures, such as those provided by H.R. 4402, to reverse a 30-year trend of increasing import reliance for materials we have here at home and lend a much-needed hand to the industries that will put Americans back to work."*

Edward Flynn, President of FMC Wyoming and Member of the Board of Directors of the American Natural Soda Ash Corporation reported that, *"soda ash mined and processed on federal lands contributes nearly one billion dollars annually to our balance of trade, twenty million in federal royalties, and some 3,000 direct jobs."* However, without enactment of the Soda Ash Royalty Extension Act, BLM's proposed rate increase, *"is not only counterproductive to increasing federal revenues from soda ash production, but threatens our industry's export and jobs growth."*

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