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

Opening Statement of
Chairman Doc Hastings
House Committee on Natural Resources
At the Full Committee Markup on H.R. 6082,
“The Congressional Replacement of President Obama’s
Energy-Restricting and Job-Limiting Offshore Drilling Plan”
On Wednesday, July 17, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.

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Under section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Leasing Act, when any President proposes a new five-year offshore drilling plan it must be submitted to Congress for a mandatory 60-day review before it can become final and take effect. On June 28th, President Obama’s proposed 2012-2017 offshore plan was submitted to Congress and the 60-day clock started ticking.

President Obama’s proposed plan would place 85% of America’s offshore areas off-limits to energy production. It doesn’t open one new area for leasing and energy production.

According to analysis conducted by the Congressional Research Service, the President has proposed fewer lease sales in his plan than any President since the process began in 1980. President Obama measures worse than even Jimmy Carter.

President Obama’s proposal would set our nation’s energy production back to the days before 2008 when two moratoria prohibited drilling of the vast majority of America’s offshore resources. Both moratoria were lifted after the summer of 2008 due to the outrage of the American people over the cost of four-dollar-per-gallon gasoline – and they demanded that the federal government take action. President Obama proposes to effectively re-impose the moratoria – despite the fact that economic analysis shows expanding offshore drilling could create over a million new American jobs.

President Obama and his Administration have deliberately reversed course to put the brakes on new American energy production and job creation. In the first weeks after President Obama was sworn into office, the Interior Department took a nearly complete new offshore lease plan and put it on hold for six-months, and then tossed that draft plan out entirely and started over. Along the way, they delayed and canceled multiple lease sales.

President Obama is responsible for canceling the Virginia lease sale scheduled for 2011 and then refusing to include Virginia in his 2012-2017 plan. When it comes to offshore energy production and the jobs it could create for Virginia, President Obama has repeatedly declared to the Commonwealth: not while I’m in office. If President Obama has his way, Virginia will be left out in the cold until 2017 at the absolute soonest.

The President's proposed offshore plan represents a giant step backwards for American energy production and a giant lost opportunity to create over a million new American jobs.

The bill being considered at today's markup, HR 6082, is titled the "Congressional Replacement of President Obama's Energy-Restricting and Job-limiting Offshore Drilling Plan."

In stark contrast to President Obama's plan that outsources American jobs and American energy, this bill represents a drill-smart plan that focuses energy production in specific areas containing America's greatest known oil and natural gas resources.

Very simply, the bill would replace the lease sales schedule in the President's proposed plan with a more responsible, robust plan that safely opens these new areas known to possess the greatest energy resources. And it does this while ensuring that necessary and required environmental reviews are conducted. It is a job-creating plan that embraces the American people's demand that we harness more of America's offshore energy resources.

President Obama likes to give speeches claiming support for expanding American energy production, including oil and natural gas drilling, but as I've repeatedly stated, the President's actions are 180 degrees opposite of his words. The President's policies don't match his rhetoric. And we hear a lot of rhetoric.

This Congress has a lawful responsibility to review the plan submitted by the Administration and if it does not meet the standards expected by the American people—which President Obama's plan certainly does not—we should replace it with a real plan to create jobs, grow our economy, and lower gasoline prices with more American energy.

That's exactly what this bill will do – and it challenges President Obama to live up to his rhetoric. In the President's speeches, he often employs phrases such as "yes we can", "hope and change", "move forward" and "believe in America."

Well, to those who say Congress shouldn't or can't act to replace the President Obama's plan, I say yes...we...can. That's the job of Congress and we can do better than President Obama's no-new-drilling, no-new-jobs offshore plan. Let's not just hope for better, let's move the country forward and change President Obama's plan into a real pro-energy, pro-jobs offshore plan that truly believes in America.