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

Opening Statement of
Representative Doc Hastings
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
On Thursday, September 17, 2009, at 10:00 a.m.
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Before the legislative hearing on H.R. 3534,
"The Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources Act of 2009"

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TODD YOUNG
REPUBLICAN CHIEF OF STAFF

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today is the second day of hearings on this legislation. Yesterday, I discussed how this bill will set up road blocks on the path to energy development. Instead of opening additional areas for drilling, this bill raises fees and taxes, balloons government bureaucracy, rolls out more red tape, and delays greater wind, solar, oil and natural gas production.

Today, I would like to explain how these roadblocks would directly impact Americans.

First, these roadblocks will slow America's oil, natural gas, wind and solar energy production and ultimately make energy more expensive. While the average price of gas is about \$2.55 a gallon right now, this unfortunately won't always be the case. Before we know it, the American people will be forced to pay more at the pump again. And when they reach for their wallets, they'll ask "why didn't the Administration and Congress take action to actually increase all types of domestic energy?" Americans won't like the answer. Because unless the Administration and Democrat Leaders in Congress take action on an all-of-the-above energy plan, they'll have to explain that they were focused on legislation that will actually make it harder and more expensive to produce American energy.

Second, the roadblocks in this bill will increase our reliance on foreign sources of energy from countries that don't live up to America's high environmental standards. Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Russia, Venezuela, and other nations are increasing their energy supply at a break neck pace – but America is at a standstill. And our Committee is considering legislation that will make our nation less energy independent and less secure. As the American Chemistry Council recently wrote "the bill fails to contribute in any way to the energy security of the United States."

And finally, these roadblocks threaten current energy jobs and prevent the creation of new American energy jobs at a time when almost ten percent of Americans are unemployed. Last week, a Price Waterhouse study confirmed that oil and gas industries contribute 9.2 million full-time and part-time jobs, accounting for 5.2 percent of our Nation's total employment. When 14.7 million Americans are out of work, the last thing our country needs is for Congress to pass a bill that will eliminate even more jobs in our country. Instead, we should be focused on helping even more Americans take advantage of high-paying jobs in all parts of the energy sector.

But unfortunately, Democrat Leaders in Congress are focused on passing a National Energy Tax bill and a Roadblock to Energy bill that will only make our current economic problems worse.

I continue to urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to choose a better path forward by supporting the Republican all-of-the-above energy plan that will help Americans by creating new high-paying jobs, protecting our environment, and providing affordable energy.