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

Opening Statement of
Chairman Doug Lamborn
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
At the Legislative Hearing on
H.R. 4381, H.R. 4382, H.R. 4383, H.R. 4402, H.R. 1192 and H.R. 2176
April 26, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.

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JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

Today we are meeting for a hearing on six pieces of legislation aimed at supporting the development of a real all-of-the-above energy and minerals agenda on federal lands. The legislation we will discuss today will expand American energy and minerals development, create thousands of good-paying American jobs, and help lessen our dependence on foreign oil.

This hearing has been subject of a great deal of debate already this week. Both the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management have condemned us. I would point out that both were offered the opportunity to be here today but actively choose not to attend our hearing to share their thoughts, instead they will continue to spend their time campaigning and trying to score political points instead of working for the development of jobs and energy in America.

Secretary's Fairy Tale

The Secretary talked about living in a "fairy tale," the real fairy tale is a Secretary who would allow the President to say that they are "doing everything they can to lower gas prices." The Secretary talks about an expansive energy agenda but the real impact of their policies is exactly the opposite.

On solar, their proposed PEIS could potentially close at least 98% of all federal lands to solar energy.

On wind, after nearly 4 years in office, their "smart from the start" offshore wind program has neither started, nor seems particularly smart since they haven't offered a single OCS block for lease or permitted a single project initiated during this Administration's term in office.

The reckless moratorium imposed by this administration has cost us 25% of OCS production last year, thousands of jobs and dropped our revenue returns off a cliff.

Their OCS leasing program has cut in half the number of companies interested in bidding in the OCS and lowered financial returns to the federal government.

Their proposed rule on coal mining will harm 22 states, cost 7,000 jobs, and increase energy prices for nearly every American.

Sadly those are the facts and the impacts of the policy this Administration is pursuing.

Today's Hearing

The focus today is onshore energy development. Unfortunately, the onshore impacts of this Administration's policies has been equally devastating. We have seen an exodus of activity in the West as companies leave federal land due to permitting and regulatory delays.

The Secretary just the other day announced a new computer system that will help with permit processing. That is wonderful; and it may actually help reduce permitting times -which is why Republicans included it in legislation in 2005. However, that system would have already been in place had this Administration not stopped it when they were first elected.

The Secretary has allowed the President to say they are "doing everything they can to lower gas prices." Clearly that can't mean leasing the fewest acres in BLM's history 3 years in a row. But that is the legacy of this Administration.

Let me put this in the starkest terms possible. In 2010, in my home state of Colorado 220,000 acres as potentially rich in oil and natural gas were identified and proposed for leasing. This Administration in its effort, as the President said to "do everything," allowed just over 5,000, or 4%, of those lands to be leased. Yes apparently to this President in Colorado 4% is everything. The real fairy tale is that this Administration actually believes it is "doing everything" to reduce gas prices.

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. Mr. Tipton's "Planning for American Energy Act" aims to ensure the Department of the Interior has a sufficient plan in place to expand onshore energy development on federal lands to ensure steady production of American energy for the needs of US citizens.

Mr. Coffman's, "Providing Leasing Certainty for American Energy Act", will require the Department of the Interior to lease at least 25% of land in which there is interest expressed in energy development and provide much needed leasing certainty to the energy job creators.

And my own "Streamlining Permitting of American Energy Act" aims to streamline the extremely burdensome and lengthy permitting process energy developers must undergo and will give BLM field offices the resources they need to process permit applications quickly and efficiently.

To encourage domestic minerals development, we will hear testimony regarding a bill introduced by Mr. Amodei, the "National Strategic and Critical Minerals Production Act of 2012". In a time when we are heavily dependent on foreign countries, especially China, for our critical minerals needs, Mr. Amodei's legislation would require more efficient development of our own domestic strategic and critical mineral resources.

We will also discuss the "Soda Ash Royalty Extension, Job Creation, and Export Enhancement Act of 2011," which was introduced by Congresswoman Lummis. This legislation would continue a successful experiment that helped promote jobs on federal land.

Finally, we will consider a bill introduced by Mr. Heinrich, the “Clean Energy Promotion Act”. This legislation, similar to proposals in my bill, would direct solar and wind rental fees be utilized for the processing of renewable energy permits.

For the witnesses who chose to accept our invitation, I’d like to thank you very much for appearing before our committee today, and I very much look forward to hearing your testimony.