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**Opening Statement by**  
**Chairman Rob Bishop**  
**Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands**  
**At the Legislative Hearing on**  
**H.R. 3641, H.R. 3894, H.R. 4606, H.R. 5544 and H.R. 5791**  
**Friday, June 8, 2012**

*As prepared for delivery.*

We are pleased that the sponsors of today's bills have agreed to appear before us today.

Mr. Rehberg will testify on his bill to authorize the issuance of right-of-way permits for natural gas pipelines in Glacier National Park.

Mr. Cravaack will testify on his bill to authorize an exchange of land between the National Forest System the State of Minnesota.

Mr. Flake will testify on his bill to provide access to Wilderness Areas for the restoration of water sources during a state of emergency.

Mr. Farr will testify on his bill to establish Pinnacles National Park in the State of California as a unit of the National Park System.

Mr. Jackson will testify on HR 3894 to authorize a resource study of the Pullman Historic Site in Chicago.

I am especially eager to hear more about Mr. Cravaack's bill because I have a keen interest in finding a way to allow communities with federal land to provide for the education of their children.

I also want to comment on Mr. Flake's bill that will provide reasonable and necessary access to Wilderness Areas for the restoration of water sources, supplies, or infrastructure during a state of emergency declared by the Governor of a State.

That this bill is needed shows that some of this country's wilderness areas were designated without adequate foresight and as a result communities are denied the necessary flexibility to respond to emergency conditions. This bill is one remedy for when wilderness designations infringe upon a city's water source infrastructure, but it makes me wonder why this pipeline was included in this wilderness area in the first place. A pipeline doesn't fit the definition of wilderness.

I know some feel that wilderness designations can only work one way, but I think we might also be able to resolve the issue by removing this pipeline area from the wilderness boundary.

I commend my colleague, however, for recognizing that what is happening to Tombstone, can happen elsewhere and drafting his bill so it would apply to other wilderness areas. Sadly, this is only one example of the rigidity that prevents a community from addressing emergency situations in wilderness areas.

There are too many examples of situations where fires, hazardous fuels, invasive species and other natural or man-made disasters cannot be addressed in the expedited and efficient manner necessary.

Instead of protecting the area, federal policies all too often lead to significant destruction of wilderness acreage, loss of wildlife, of resources, of recreational opportunities and robs the people who live there of their ability to provide for their families.

Too often, federal policies compound the problem with no public benefit. I know the gentleman from Arizona and the citizens of Tombstone are as frustrated with the heavy hand of Washington and the dilatory, bureaucratic and dysfunctional processes that block them from timely solutions they could otherwise ably achieve on their own.