



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Opening Statement of **Chairman Doug Lamborn** Subcommittee on Energy & Mineral Resources

On Wednesday, September 17, 2014
1334 Longworth House Office Building
Legislative Hearing on

H.R. 5066 (Benishek), *Data Preservation Act of 2014* and H.R. 5176 (Lujan), To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, and for other purposes.

I would like to welcome everyone here in the room today and listening via our webcast to the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources legislative hearing on H.R. 5066, the “Data Preservation Act of 2014” introduced by the gentleman from Michigan, Dr. Benishek, and H.R. 5176, that authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to retire coal preference right lease applications for which the Secretary has made an affirmative commercial quantities determination, and for other purposes introduced by our former committee colleague from New Mexico, Mr. Lujan and co-sponsored by representative from Wyoming, Mrs. Lummis.

Back in the 1990s, building on the success of the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Program, several professional geologic organizations began to push for a National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation Program to facilitate the acquisition, archiving and storage of mineral and core data. Each year tens of millions of private and public dollars are spent in the U.S. acquiring geologic and geophysical data by various industries and state and federal agencies.

If saved, archived and stored it can be reviewed, reanalyzed and reinterpreted and can help identify and solve environmental problems, locate public safety hazards saving lives, or direct exploration geologists to possible new discoveries of energy and mineral resources.

As stated in Testimony; “in 2008, reinspection of a small manila pouch full of rock chips from a dry oil test well in southern Texas led to the discovery of the Eagle Ford Shale play: a \$25 billion economic impact in a 20 county area supporting more than 47,000 jobs.”

Not an insignificant discovery!

H.R.5176, solves a long standing Department of the Interior obligation to the Navajo Nation to transfer lands selected by the Navajo Nation in Trust for the Navajo by allowing the Interior Secretary to address prior mineral rights on the selected parcels.

The Navajo Nation was granted the right to select certain federal lands to be placed in trust for the Navajo as part of the 1974 Navajo Hopi Settlement Act that settled a long running boundary dispute between the Navajo and Hopi.

The Navajo relinquished land and relocated its citizens as part of the agreement. Forty-years is a long time for the Navajo Nation to wait for the transfer of these lands.

Now I would like to yield two minutes of my time to Dr. Benishek to introduce his legislation and his witness from Michigan Potash.

[yield to Benishek]

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today.

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