

**Rep. Bill Johnson**  
**Member of Congress**  
**Ohio's Sixth District**

*"Natural Gas—America's New Energy Opportunity: Creating Jobs, Energy and Community Growth"*

Opening Remarks

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for hosting this hearing and let me be the first to officially welcome you to Steubenville, the home of Dean Martin.

More importantly to today's hearing, Steubenville sits atop the world's largest natural gas deposits located in the Marcellus and Utica Shale formations. This hearing today will shed light on the many direct and indirect economic opportunities that are coming to Eastern and Southern Ohio because of oil and gas development using both new and old technology.

But it's not just Ohio. America is blessed with the largest energy reserves in the world and according to the Congressional Research Service, the United States tops Russia, Saudi Arabia, and China when it comes to reserves of oil, natural gas, and coal.

Harnessing these resources is critical to Ohio's economic prosperity. Right here in Ohio – it is estimated that we could see up to 200,000 good-paying new jobs come to Ohio with increased natural gas and oil production and related jobs.

But the job opportunities that will come from natural gas aren't isolated simply to harvesting the source. These new job opportunities will be in supporting industries like manufacturing, housing, retail, entertainment, and service – to name a few.

In the past few weeks alone private companies not directly involved in the harvesting of the oil and gas have announced hundreds of millions of planned investment that will create hundreds if not thousands of direct and indirect jobs. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

However, you don't need to take my word for it because ABC World News report came right here to Steubenville last October and highlighted the economic development that is coming to town. In the report, the anchor stated that 300 jobs had already come to Steubenville and that another 10,000 jobs could be created in the next three years.

While unemployment in Steubenville is still too high and above the national average at 9.9%, this is a huge improvement from when it was as high as 15% in 2010.

And as we all saw last week, it is not just the private sector and individuals that are benefitting from the oil development, the City of Steubenville has also taken advantage of their resources.

Between selling excess water to companies and by leasing land at the old landfill in town , Steubenville will now have extra money to make long term investments to improve infrastructure that they otherwise would not have the money to pay for these much needed upgrades.

As I have met with senior executives and CEOs of the companies coming to Ohio to develop the natural resources I always stress two important points.

And in fact, I told the CEO of Hess Corporation, whose company will be drilling at the old city landfill in town, these important conditions when he came to visit me.

I tell these executives that they need to hire as many Ohioans as possible. These resources belong to the hard working people of Eastern and Southern Ohio and Ohioans deserve to be the ones as much as possible working on the rigs and the associated projects.

That is why I have been working with Eastern Gateway Community College, other educational institutions, trade unions like the Pipefitter's Union represented today by Butch Taylor and the energy companies to ensure that our labor force has the skills necessary for the jobs and that they are given first priority when hiring starts.

I also tell them that Ohioans who decide to lease their land for development must be treated fairly by their companies. Ohioans deserved to be given a fair shake by these companies and should not be taken advantage of by these companies.

All of the executives have given me their word to follow these conditions and I will hold them accountable if they do not live up to their word.

We have an opportunity to usher in a new era of American exceptionalism with Ohio energy development if only the Federal Government stays out of the way.

However, the Federal government is doing everything it can to stand in the way of growing our economy and creating jobs through energy development.

The Department of Interior is in the process of developing new rules regulating hydraulic fracturing on federal lands that will serve as the blueprint for new Federal EPA rules implementing regulations that could stop all of this development in its tracks.

As we will hear from Mr. Simmer from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources later, the State of Ohio has been regulating hydraulic fracturing for over 60 years and we do not need bureaucrats from Washington D.C. telling Ohio's regulators how to do the job they have already been doing responsibly for decades.

I trust Ohio and Ohioans to know what's best for Ohio rather than unelected bureaucrats in Washington.

I must also point out that while there have been a lot of scare tactics on the issue of hydraulic fracturing being thrown around lately, the fact remains that there has not been one single case in the over 1 million hydraulic fracturing jobs nationwide that has resulted in the contamination of drinking water.

Furthermore, when there issues with the earthquakes in the Youngstown area because of nearby injection wells, the Governor and state regulators acted quickly and shut down the wells. The Governor also ordered additional monitoring of injection wells to ensure early detection of the injection wells cause future seismic activity.

Mr. Chairman, thanks again for taking the time to come out to Steubenville from Colorado to draw attention to the excitement and vast economic potential around energy development in Eastern and Southern Ohio. With that I yield back the balance of my time.