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

**Opening Statement of
Chairman Doc Hastings**
Committee on Natural Resources
Full Committee Mark up on *American Energy & Infrastructure Act*
Wednesday, February 1, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

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JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

Today, this Committee will mark up energy portions of the *American Energy & Infrastructure Jobs Act*, a common sense jobs plan that links American energy production to important infrastructure projects.

By removing government barriers to American energy production we can help fund road and bridge construction and repairs without raising taxes or relying on borrowed ‘stimulus’ spending.

This is a vastly different approach from what we’ve seen from the Obama Administration and the previous Democrat-run Congress. This is a jobs plan without earmarks or stimulus spending.

This plan allows access to American energy resources, which leads to the creation of new jobs, certainty for small businesses that depend on affordable energy, and the generation of new revenue that can be used to build road and infrastructure projects to create even more American jobs. Unlocking our energy resources starts a wave of economic benefits and job creation that will touch nearly every aspect of our lives and economy.

But the benefits of increased American energy production stretch beyond job creation and new federal revenue. The energy provisions in this plan will in all likelihood help lower gasoline prices for American families and businesses and decrease our dependence on foreign oil imports, thereby strengthening our national security.

This plan will expand access to our energy resources that are currently being kept under lock-and-key by the Obama Administration. This Republican pro-energy, job creation plan stands in stark contrast to the failed, job-destroying energy policies of the Obama Administration.

Last week, President Obama tried in his State of the Union address to take credit for increased oil and natural gas production and claims to now support ‘all-of-the-above’ American energy. However, don’t be fooled, President Obama’s rhetoric is 180 degrees from his actions.

In fact, the energy provisions that we will debate today directly reverse Obama Administration policies that block access to our own American energy resources. Whereas the President has used his regulatory fist to block energy projects and drive up the cost of energy, the Republican plan will create American jobs by removing government hurdles to American energy production.

The Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) was open to new energy production when President Obama took office, due to the lifting of the moratoria by both Congress and President Bush in 2008. Since taking the oath of office, President Obama has effectively reinstated the drilling ban on the vast majority of the OCS. Our plan would lift President Obama's moratorium and allow new energy production to occur in areas containing the most oil and natural gas resources in the Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic and portions of the Eastern Gulf of Mexico.

In addition, this bill would open less than 3 percent of ANWR to energy production in an area that was specifically set aside by President Jimmy Carter for oil and natural gas production. ANWR represents one of the best and most promising areas in our country for new onshore energy production.

Finally, the Obama Administration has delayed oil shale leases in the Rocky Mountains and imposed onerous new bureaucratic regulations. This bill will set clear rules for the development of U.S. oil shale resources, require additional leases to be issued, and promote shale technology research and development.

The *American Energy & Infrastructure Jobs Act* is an action plan to create more American jobs, more American energy and more American revenue.

I looked forward to the debate today on these important energy measures and advancing them through our Committee.