

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy
Hearing on “The Role of the States in Protecting the Environment Under Current Law”
February 15, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

We are eager to better understand the role of the states in conserving resources and protecting the health of their residents. It's a special pleasure to see Hal Fitch, who manages the Michigan DEQ's Office of Oil, Gas, and Minerals.

Effective regulatory management of resource development is crucial. Excess restrictions costs jobs and revenue, but inadequate oversight and regulation could turn a state's residents against resource development. We must strike the right regulatory balance.

Most people agree that for policy decisions to be fair, they must be made at the appropriate level of government. But what is that level? It's the one closest to the people but still has enough authority to carry out the policy. If the decision affects only people in Kalamazoo, it should be made by the Kalamazoo City Commission; if it also affects others in Michigan, it should be made by state officials. Only those policies that impact citizens from more than one state should be made by the federal government.

Today's hearing gives us a chance to see environmental protection through the eyes of state officials. We will see first-hand that they:

- Care about the environments in which they live and work;
- Have professional experience and local expertise;
- Seek the right balance between environmental protection and economic opportunity; and
- Take seriously their legal obligations under both state and federal law.

It is important to understand the important role states play in protecting the environment. One thing we already know is that Washington does not always know best.

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