

OPENING STATEMENT

The Honorable Andy Harris (R-MD), Chairman

Subcommittee on Energy and Environment

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Supporting American Jobs and the Economy Through Expanded Energy Production: Challenges and Opportunities of Unconventional Resources Technology

May 10, 2012

Good morning and welcome to this morning's hearing entitled *Supporting American Jobs and the Economy through Expanded Energy Production: Challenges and Opportunities of Unconventional Resources Technology*.

Two weeks ago, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee heard from expert witnesses about America's vast untapped unconventional energy resources. The amount of energy under own soil is striking. With continued technological advances and the right policies to enable access to these resources, America could become the global leader in energy production for the next generation and beyond.

For example, the Green River Basin located in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming may contain up to three trillion barrels of oil—more potential oil than the rest of the world's current oil reserves combined. If this energy—which is overwhelmingly on Federal lands—is made available, I am confident American ingenuity will find ways to responsibly explore and produce this resource.

Portions of the United States are already experiencing the significant economic benefits of unconventional energy production. North Dakota's unemployment rate is the lowest in the nation due to the shale oil revolution. The state's top economic challenge is not job creation, but rather finding workers to fill the thousands of job openings created by the energy boom—a problem most states would love to have. The Federal government should afford other states the opportunity to replicate this success story through aggressive pursuit of leasing, permitting, and technological opportunities.

Unfortunately, when it comes to unconventional energy, President Obama talks the talk more than he walks the walk. Beginning with his State of the Union speech earlier this year, the President has touted the historical contributions of the Department of Energy's fossil energy research programs, while his annual budget request to Congress repeatedly calls for elimination of the very same programs. And while the President regularly boasts of his support for an "all of the above" energy strategy, his Administration is focused more on producing new regulations and restrictions than it is on producing more oil and gas. For example, the President has unleashed ten different Federal agencies in pursuit of potential regulations on hydraulic fracturing.

Similarly, President Obama's campaign website includes an "all of the above" energy page that neglects to even acknowledge the fuel providing 45 percent of the United States' electricity:

coal. It is clear the President continues to pick his preferred energy technologies at the expense of the free market and consumer choice.

Perhaps most incredibly, just three days after his State of the Union speech declaring his commitment to an all of the above energy strategy, the President's Interior Department effectively reduced lands available for oil shale development by 75 percent—putting over 1.5 million acres off limits not only to exploration and production, but also to research and development.

This morning I am interested in examining the impact of the Administration's anti-fossil fuel policies, as well as exploring what targeted research questions DOE can and should address to facilitate the further development of America's unconventional energy resources.

I also look forward to hearing how innovative companies are enabling more efficient and environmentally sound development of America's unconventional oil and gas resources.

I thank the witnesses for appearing before the Subcommittee and I now recognize Ranking Member Tonko for his opening statement.