

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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Statement of Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Paul Broun (R-Ga.)
Hearing on Bakken Petroleum: The Substance of Energy Independence

Chairman Broun: Thank you, Chairman Lummis, and welcome to all of our witnesses. While I look forward to hearing from both panels today, I must say I am disappointed - though not surprised - at this Administration's continued unwillingness to work with the Congress. Chairman Lummis and I invited representatives from the agencies who are experts in the subject matter because we are interested in the science behind Bakken crude. Instead, both agencies appearing before the Committee today declined to provide the witnesses we requested, sending us in their place witnesses more knowledgeable on the politics behind Bakken crude. As I said, I am not surprised, just disappointed.

Over the past few years, the United States has made significant technological advances in the production of energy, leading to an increased supply of our country's vast resources to fulfill the energy needs of Americans. Much of this is due to the influx of crude oil output from the Bakken Shale region, which topped 1 million barrels per day earlier this year, and is expected to climb to 1.5 million barrels a day over the next three years.

Given the large volume of crude being transported across the country, the Department of Transportation began testing its characteristics to determine its flammability and volatility. Preliminary results of the review were published in July, which concluded that crude oil from the Bakken formation "is more volatile than most other types of crude - which correlates to increased ignitability and flammability."

The DOT report's comparison of the Bakken crude, which is classified as a light, sweet crude, to crude oil in general, including heavier crudes, is a bit like comparing apples to oranges because light sweet crudes as a class are generally considered to be more volatile than heavier crudes. Separately, the North Dakota Petroleum Council commissioned a study similar to the DOT study. While both the government and industry study led to similar scientific results, the NDPC study concluded that Bakken crude is no more volatile than other types of light, sweet crudes.

Energy independence creates a healthy economy, jobs at home, and directly correlates to our national security by limiting how much we rely on foreign energy imports to survive and prosper. America is on the road toward energy independence, with domestic crude contributing extensively, and it would be disastrous to impede on this extraordinary possibility.

While I have heard the Administration claim over the years that it supports an "all-of-the-above" energy plan, I hope that when all is said and done, Bakken crude does not become an example of a "none of the below" practice.

Thank you again, Chairman Lummis, and I would like to yield the balance of my time to my good friend, Mr. Cramer, the Vice Chairman of the Oversight Subcommittee.

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