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**Statement of Environment Subcommittee Chairman Chris Stewart (R-Utah)
Hearing on “A Review of Federal Hydraulic Fracturing Research Activities”**

Chairman Stewart: Good morning and welcome to today’s joint Energy and Environment Subcommittee hearing, A Review of Federal Hydraulic Fracturing Research. I want to thank Chairman Lummis for holding a hearing with me on this important issue.

Unconventional oil and gas development enabled by hydraulic fracturing is a rare bright spot in our otherwise gloomy economy over the last few years. Given the importance of this issue, I too am disappointed that the EPA declined to send the witness we had invited, Mr. Bob Sussman, the Senior Policy Counsel to the EPA Administrator, to testify. While I hope the Agency had a good reason for its refusal to make Mr. Sussman available, they did not share this reason with us. I can only hope this will prove to be an exception rather than a trend. This is especially concerning, as EPA’s past and ongoing hydraulic fracturing studies and investigations demonstrate a cart-before-the-horse approach to the science that should make Members think seriously about whether a blank check for the Administration is a good policy.

The shale gas revolution has not only brightened our economic prospects and created sorely needed jobs, it has strengthened our energy security. Thanks to fracking, the U.S. is now poised to surpass Saudi Arabia and Russia as the world’s largest oil and gas producer in the next few years. This could dramatically alter the geopolitical landscape to the great benefit of American interests.

Yesterday, we held a hearing to examine the science of climate change. Whatever one’s position on this issue, there is no denying that fracking is helping drive reductions in carbon emissions. U.S. greenhouse gas emissions are at their lowest level since 1994, and have dropped 12 percent since 2005. In fact, from 2005 to 2011, the U.S. decreased its carbon dioxide output more than any other nation, including those countries that have implemented aggressive green energy agendas, such as Germany and Spain. In light of these facts, it is both ironic and troubling that many of the most passionate advocates for action on climate change also oppose fracking.

This should give pause to the EPA and any other agency that seeks to hinder the development of our unconventional natural gas resources. To do so would not only negatively impact our economy, but increase emissions and undercut major advances toward energy security. Rather than search for problems that do not exist, the EPA and this Administration should recognize that shale gas is a solution rather than a problem. Production, not regulation, has led to a reduction in greenhouse gases, and market forces, not restrictions, quotas, or carbon trading schemes, have positioned the U.S. as a global leader in oil and gas production.

I thank the witnesses for joining us today, and look forward to their testimony. I hope they recognize, as I do, that searching for problems as a pretext for regulation rather than focusing on the science is a waste of time, a waste of resources, and runs counter to the national interest.

I thank the gentlelady, and I yield back.

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