OPENING STATEMENT
The Honorable Ralph M. Hall (R-TX), Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Review of Hydraulic Fracturing Technology and Practices

May 11, 2011

I want to welcome everyone here today for this hearing to review hydraulic fracturing technology and practices.

The primary focus of today's hearing is EPA's draft study of hydraulic fracturing. Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, is the process by which water, sand, and a small amount of additives are pumped into a well to create enough pressure to fracture formations deep within the Earth. Advances in this 60-year old technology, combined with horizontal drilling, have transformed the production of natural gas along with the natural gas industry.

Access to shale gas that was until recently uneconomical and technically unrecoverable is driving State and local economic growth all around the country while providing new sources of domestic energy to meet growing demand. As with all energy development, deep gas drilling is not without risk and concerns about *potential* environmental effects must be examined. However, we must be careful to ensure that such concerns are evaluated objectively and within the proper context and with care taken to avoid the influence of political rhetoric. Science must drive this discussion. For example, the University of Texas just announced a comprehensive study that will do just that—separate fact from fiction regarding the potential environmental risks of hydraulic fracturing.

Unfortunately, objectivity is not EPA's strong suit, and its draft study plan is yet another example of this Administration's desire to stop domestic energy development through regulation.

The study intends to identify the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water, without ever taking into consideration the probability that such an effect may occur, or the ability of industry best practices, state laws and direct oversight, and existing Federal laws to manage the risk associated with hydraulic fracturing. No regulation or law can totally eliminate risk. A study that does not quantify environmental risks using standard practices is useless to regulators and risk managers and as such, is a waste of taxpayer money.

With regards to process, I want to note my disappointment with the lack of cooperation from the Administration in assembling this hearing. I am well aware that many of our Members sit on multiple Committees and as such, we try to be as respectful as possible on the time demands our Members have. Unfortunately, this Administration is not as respectful. I have invited six witnesses to testify this morning on hydraulic fracturing, and as you can see, there is plenty of room at the witness table to accommodate all six. However, the Environmental Protection Agency refused to permit Dr. Anastas to testify unless he was given his own panel.

This demand is counter to long-standing Committee precedent—in the last decade, EPA Senate-confirmed officials testified on single panels alongside non-government witnesses at least *eight* different

times. I personally wrote Administrator Jackson several weeks ago inquiring as to the rationale behind EPA's decision to treat this situation differently from prior practice.
Consistent with this Administration's refusal to work with this Congress, the Administrator failed to acknowledge, let alone respond, to my letter.

The lack of courtesy and professionalism being displayed is counter the President's stated goal that his Administration would work cooperatively with the 112th Congress. EPA's actions are unacceptable and will be remembered.

I thank the witnesses for being here, and I now recognize Ranking Member Johnson for five minutes for her opening statement.