

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Department of the Interior Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Hearing
Opening Statement
February 16, 2012

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding, and Mr. Secretary, thank you for taking the time to be here today.

Yesterday, I heard from Secretary Napolitano about matters pertaining to our Homeland Security. This morning, my former colleague Defense Secretary Panetta testified regarding our national security. This afternoon, I expect to hear from you on issues pertaining to U.S. energy security—an area in which, frankly, I have deep concerns that this country is falling woefully behind. After reviewing this request, nothing alleviates my anxiety. It appears we're continuing to move in the wrong direction where our country's energy independence is concerned, and that many components of this budget request merely reflect this Administration's political posturing and alarming misunderstanding of our country's energy needs.

To be frank, if the Administration has an overarching energy plan, I am at a loss to recognize it. During a weak economic recovery, American families struggling to make ends meet desperately want lower and more consistent energy and fuel prices. While the President would make it sound as though his Administration has made great progress in expanding domestic production of conventional energy since 2008, the actual picture is far less rosy. Instead of pursuing commonsense proposals to shore up our energy security for the short and long term,

- the Administration has turned loose EPA regulators on the coal and natural gas industries, using draconian regulations to shut down the permitting process;
- the State Department bowed to extreme environmentalists in denying the Keystone XL pipeline extension, a bipartisan and publically-supported effort to supply our country with cheap, secure Canadian oil;
- the Department of Energy has thrown away taxpayer money supporting companies like bankrupted Solyndra and floundering Fisker, whose products would never have benefitted middle class Americans, our economy, or the environment; and
- your Agency continues to hold hostage OCS oil and gas reserves to fuel our economy for decades. Meanwhile, Interior is surging ahead with a universally decried and legally dubious proposal to merge the Bureau of Land Management and Office of Surface Mining that by all accounts will bring permitting for coal and other minerals to a standstill.

If there is a common thread tying all of these efforts together, it seems to be that they raise energy costs, eliminate needed jobs, and reduce our energy security. With Iran creating instability in the Middle East and threatening the Strait of Hormuz, aggressive expansion by Chinese state-owned enterprises to monopolize energy and commodity markets, and rapidly growing demand by emerging economies, America must attain greater energy independence to ensure a secure and prosperous future. Mr. Secretary, while our primary purpose is to discuss

your budget request for FY13, you no doubt understand the wider implications for the actions taken by your Department regarding the production of domestic energy inherently vital to powering our economy and maintaining our national security. I hope that you can touch on these and other issues in your remarks, so that we may better understand your Department's plans. Thank you.

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