



In Case You Missed It

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

“Utilizing our vast resources in Alaska and across the U.S. is an essential part of House Republicans’ effort to address rising gasoline prices, increase our national security, create jobs and strengthen our economy. We can significantly reduce our foreign energy dependence if we simply explore, develop and produce the resources in our own back yard.”

[Expedite oil reserve drilling: NPR-A progress requires more than lease sales](#)

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By Rep. Doc Hastings

Last month, I had the opportunity to travel to Alaska to tour energy development projects with Gov. Sean Parnell and Rep. Don Young. We traveled to ConocoPhillips’ Alpine field, where we viewed the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, Kaktovik on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain, where I attended a community meeting with local citizens, and Prudhoe Bay, where we viewed the transAlaska oil pipeline.

There is no question that Alaska is blessed with scenic landscapes and a vibrant ecosystem; however, it is also home to some of the most abundant energy resources in this country.

These resources, if responsibly harnessed, hold the potential to significantly strengthen American energy independence, create thousands of American jobs and generate billions of dollars in new revenue.

The NPR-A is one of the first places where I believe Congress should focus its effort. This 23-million-acre tract of land in northern Alaska was set aside, and remains specifically designated, for the purpose of providing oil and natural gas resources to the people of the United States. According to low estimates, the NPR-A contains 2.7 billion barrels of oil and 114 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and there is broad, bipartisan support for developing its resources. Even President Obama has acknowledged NPRA’s potential and has called for annual lease sales in the area.

What many people outside of Alaska don’t understand is that simply issuing lease sales — as the President has proposed — is not enough. At the heart of the problem is bureaucratic red tape that is blocking the construction of roads, pipelines and bridges needed to transport the energy out of the NPR-A. Companies are ready to produce oil and natural gas in the NPR-A but simply have no way of getting it out of there and delivered to the American people.

Recent efforts by ConocoPhillips to build a critical bridge in the NPR-A paint a grim picture of the regulatory hurdles delaying production in the area. This project has been tangled in red tape since 2008 and the Obama administration is delaying the issuance of a permit to allow the project to move forward.

It is clear that although President Obama says he supports expanded domestic energy production, his actions do not match his rhetoric.

Time after time, his administration has delayed or blocked exploration, development and production of promising resources like those in the NPR-A.

The NPR-A is meant to be a national energy resource. That's why I joined Rep. Don Young to introduce HR 2150, The National Petroleum Reserve Alaska Access Act, legislation designed to cut through these roadblocks and begin to unlock the full potential of energy resources in Alaska. HR 2150 will bring certainty to the process by requiring firm timelines to approve infrastructure permits in the NPR-A.

Companies should never have to wait for years on end to receive approval for a permit to build essential infrastructure. HR 2150 was recently approved by the Committee on Natural Resources and the next step is to go to the House floor to be voted on as part of Republicans' American Energy Initiative.

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We can significantly reduce our foreign energy dependence if we simply explore, develop and produce the resources in our own back yard.

Rep. Doc Hastings, a Republican, since 1995 has represented central Washington, including Yakima, Chelan and Kennewick. He is chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources.

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