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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

Opening Statement By
Chairman Doug Lamborn
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

At the Oversight Field Hearing on
“Federal Regulation: Economic, job and energy security implications
of federal hydraulic fracturing regulation”
Wednesday, May 2, 2012 in Denver, CO

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I'd like to thank everyone for taking time out of their schedule to be with us today. I'm Congressman Doug Lamborn and I have the privilege of serving the 5th Congressional district in my home state of Colorado and serving as Chairman of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. Our subcommittee has broad jurisdiction over onshore and offshore energy production on public lands. With much of those located here in the West, these issues affect every single one of us in the state of Colorado.

Today we are here in Denver to discuss the economic, job and energy security implications of federal hydraulic fracturing regulation. Fortunately for us, some of the richest shale fields in the entire world are located within the United States. Previously unproductive areas such as the Bakken Formation and Barnett Shale are now extraordinarily new productive oil and gas fields because of hydraulic fracturing – which is now used in more than 90% of oil and gas production wells.

In states like North Dakota, which enjoys the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, energy production has been allowed to flourish due to state and local regulations that both safely guard the environment and public welfare, while allowing for the safe and responsible production of shale oil and gas. Here in the West, where the energy industry is a driving force of the local and statewide economies, through very comprehensive stakeholder discussions, states have crafted their own regulations to monitor hydraulic fracturing within their boundaries.

These regulations include input from all stakeholders involved and take into consideration the needs of the local communities, local environment and geography and still allow for a robust energy industry to thrive.

However, recently announced plans to implement a one-size-fits all program of hydraulic fracturing regulations threaten to impede this progress in all states. While the Obama Administration frequently touts its record of increased energy productions, unfortunately, as we have seen, the Administration's anti-energy policies continuously hinder rather than help job creation and energy production. The Obama Administration's Bureau of Land Management issued 44% fewer oil and natural gas leases in 2009 and 2010 than in 2007 and 2008. In addition the number of new wells drilled on federal land has declined 39% during that time period. We in the West are blessed with tremendous energy resources.

But this Administration's policies have prevented us from creating jobs for our citizens and developing our own resources. Recent statistics show that 93% of shale wells are on state or private land – while only 7% are located on federal land.

While states have worked diligently to implement hydraulic fracturing regulations on their own lands the Obama Administration seeks to hijack those efforts and impose their own blanket set of regulations with little to no consultation with the states or tribes that would be affected. While we have our own set of carefully crafted and effective regulations, I am disappointed that when invited, Governor Hickenlooper and the Department of Natural Resources chose not defend their work, or the citizens of Colorado, against this federal onslaught of destructive regulations.

We are grateful to have representatives from the state governments of Utah, Wyoming and State Representative Sonnenberg from the 52nd district of Colorado to explain the repercussions of these regulations on our citizens.

While we here in Colorado have our own set of carefully crafted and effective regulations, but I am extremely disappointed that when invited, Governor Hickenlooper and the Department of Natural Resources chose not defend their work, or the citizens of Colorado, against this federal onslaught of destructive regulations.

I'd like to thank the Denver State Capitol for hosting us here today and I thank my colleagues for taking the time to be here to discuss this important issue. I'd also like to thank our witnesses and guest for being here today and I look forward to hearing from our panels.