

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

May 23, 2025

Mr. Doug Helton
Former Regional Operations Supervisor, Emergency Response Division (Retired)
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
8718 29th Ave NW
Seattle, WA 98117

Dear Mr. Helton:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources at a legislative hearing on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, on the following bills:

- **H.R. 513 (Rep. Higgins)**, "*Offshore Lands Authorities Act of 2025*"
- **H.R. 931 (Rep. Downing)**, To allow certain Federal minerals to be mined consistent with the Bull Mountains Mining Plan Modification, and for other purposes.
- **H.R. 2250 (Rep. DelBene)**, "*National Landslide Preparedness Act Reauthorization Act of 2025*"
- **H.R. 2556 (Rep. Hunt)**, "*Comprehensive Offshore Resource Evaluation Act of 2025*" or the "*CORE Act of 2025*"
- **H.R. 3168 (Rep. Valadao)**, "*National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2025*"
- **H.R. 3176 (Rep. Begich)**, To amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to reauthorize the National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System.

Your testimony was extremely helpful in defining the Subcommittee's understanding of the issues and I appreciate the effort you took to prepare and present your testimony. While many questions were asked during the hearing, the Subcommittee has additional questions, attached, for your reply.

Please forward your responses to Jacob Greenberg, Legislative Assistant, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, at Jacob.Greenberg@mail.house.gov by June 9, 2025. Your assistance in meeting this deadline is requested, as failure to meet it will be noted in the printed transcript.

Once again, thank you for your extensive effort in making this a valuable hearing.

Sincerely,



Pete Stauber
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
Chairman

Enclosure

Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources
Legislative Hearing
1324 Longworth House Office Building
May 20, 2025
2:00 PM

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Questions from Rep. Huffman for Mr. Doug Helton, former Regional Operations Supervisor, Emergency Response Division, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

1. This administration is pushing to open new areas of the Arctic Ocean to offshore oil and gas drilling. As an expert on oil spill response, what would an oil spill response in the Arctic actually look like in practice? What are the unique challenges to responding to a spill in that region, both environmental and logistical? Is full recovery a realistic possibility?
2. What are the impacts of oil spills on fisheries, both commercial and subsistence?
3. H.R. 513 and H.R. 2556 would facilitate offshore oil and gas drilling in long-protected areas of the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf, including the Atlantic, Pacific, Alaska, and the Eastern Gulf. While the more catastrophic potential impacts of oil spills were discussed during the hearing, oil and gas drilling also involves frequent smaller-scale spills. How common are small spills, and what effects do they have on ecosystems and coastal communities?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add for the record?