

**Opening Statement of Rep. Matt Salmon (R-AZ)**  
**House Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere**  
**Hearing on “Energy Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean”**  
**April 11, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good afternoon, and welcome to what is really Part II of our Subcommittee’s look at energy security and prosperity in the Western Hemisphere. Our last hearing focused on Canada and Mexico, specifically, and we had the opportunity to discuss the Obama Administration’s unfortunate pattern of obstructing and delaying energy related projects, such as the Keystone XL Pipeline, that will stand to benefit job creation and increased energy security. We also talked about the real possibility of structural reforms to the Mexican state owned oil company, PEMEX, and the hope that these reforms will lead to increased production and increased prosperity for Mexico. We also lamented the Administration’s failure to send the Transboundary HydroCarbons Agreement with Mexico to Congress for approval, putting in question our nation’s commitment to partnering with Mexico to improve its production and exploration in pursuit of energy security and mutual prosperity.

Today, we are going to take a look at the rest of the region, and hear from Administration officials, industry and regional experts on what the energy matrix looks like in Latin America. I want this Subcommittee to lead the discussion on how to focus on energy production in the Western Hemisphere and how this focus should be centered on leveraging vast energy resources to help the region as a whole achieve energy security and prosperity through true market reforms to the sector – and beyond. The United States needs to be a constructive and willing partner in the region, and truly become a shining example of how opening up energy regimes can help resource-rich nations to create jobs, stimulate growth, and generate prosperity.

Unfortunately, as we review the opportunities available, again we find examples where the Administration is standing in the way of initiatives that will benefit our nation’s energy security and job creation. Similar to the delays in Keystone XL approvals, the Administration has been delaying approval of LNG export licenses to the Caribbean, Europe and Asia, and I hope to hear more about this from our witnesses. In my view, the delays are just more of the same from the Administration, and it is important for this Subcommittee to make clear that we want to see the US move forward with energy-related efforts and end the stall tactics.

There is so much promise in the region – from pre-salt discoveries off the coast of Brazil, to the successes brought on by Colombia’s energy sector reforms – and most importantly, from the oil and gas renaissance we have enjoyed right here in the United States. We are now in a great position to truly help our region achieve greater prosperity, job creation and energy security. This Subcommittee will continue to be a voice in favor of exporting our values of free enterprise and open markets to the betterment of the region’s growth and energy security. I truly believe that we have a real opportunity to achieve energy independence right here in the Western Hemisphere – if we unlock our true potential.

I want to thank Ambassador Pascual, State Department’s Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs, and Mr. Matthew Rooney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. And I want to welcome our second panel of witnesses, Mr. Jorge Pinon of the University of Texas at Austin, Mr. Eric Farnsworth of the Council of the Americas, and Mr. David Goldwyn of Goldwyn Global Strategies. I look forward to their testimony and hearing their perspective of how we can achieve our goals of a more prosperous and energy independent hemisphere. Thank you all for taking the time to be with us today to discuss this important and timely topic.