

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

**Opening Statement of
Chairman Doc Hastings
Committee on Natural Resources
House Committee on Natural Resources
Organizational Meeting
Wednesday, January 23, 2013, at 9:00 a.m.**

Welcome to the organizational meeting of the House Natural Resources Committee for the 113th Congress. It's an honor to once again serve as Chairman of this Committee and I anticipate an active and busy two years.

Last Congress, this Committee focused extensively on how to keep and create new American jobs, protect the environment and grow our economy through the responsible use and management of our natural resources. The Committee held over 200 legislative hearings and markups and the House passed over 115 bills from the Committee. These efforts will continue this Congress as we tackle important issues, both old and new, that have a tremendous impact on our country.

Job creation remains a top priority for this Committee. With unemployment currently at 7.8 percent and the national average price of gasoline at \$3.31 (up from \$1.84 when President Obama took office in 2009), we must do better for America's families and businesses. The issues under our Committee's jurisdiction provide us the opportunity to be directly involved in protecting and creating new American jobs and supporting economic growth throughout the country.

This Congress, we will help create jobs and grow our economy by promoting a true all-of-the-above energy plan on our Nation's public lands; protecting and expanding public access to public lands and waters to be used for recreation, conservation and economic activities; ensuring the health of our nation's forests; promoting economic development on tribal lands; keeping electricity costs low and providing an abundance of water and power supplies; and reducing burdensome government regulations and red-tape.

One of the ways we'll be taking a closer look at environmental regulations is through the creation of a new subcommittee. The Subcommittee on Public Land and Environmental Regulation will have jurisdiction over matters related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and all public lands including the National Park System, U.S. Forests, Bureau of Land Management lands and national monuments. NEPA was previously handed at the Full Committee and the creation of this new Subcommittee will allow us to review it in a more focused manner. NEPA impacts nearly every sector of our economy and the Subcommittee will

focus on not only how it relates to federal lands and activities, but also private, state and local economic development.

In a similar manner, the Full Committee will continue to examine both the strengths and weaknesses of the Endangered Species Act, which was last renewed in 1988, to identify ways to make the law work better for species and people. This will include a continued focus on how litigation and close-door legal settlements impede species recovery and cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

The Committee will also continue its strong oversight of the Executive Branch. When becoming Chairman two years ago, I stated how we would take very seriously this Committee's responsibility to conduct oversight and that I believed this was an area where both Republican and Democrat leadership had failed in the past.

Our thorough oversight of the Obama Administration will continue, and I believe it is more important than ever. There are a number of impending new regulations and policies set to be announced this year that could severely impact jobs and economic growth. These include, but are not limited to, the final implementation plan of President Obama's National Ocean Policy and mandatory ocean zoning, hydraulic fracturing regulations on public lands, and the re-write of the Stream Buffer Zone Rule on coal production.

If the President's inaugural address was any indication, we can expect a more aggressive Obama Administration in the second term. It will be this Committee's job to ensure that policies and regulations are done in a transparent manner, that the full impacts are known to the American people, and that these regulations and actions are thoroughly scrutinized and challenged if necessary.

Again, this Committee was extremely active and engaged the past two years, and if I had one message to those returning Members and our new Members it would be: get ready and fasten your seatbelts because last Congress was just the warm-up, we're going to pick up the pace in the 113th Congress.