

Duncan Remarks: House Committee on Natural Resources – Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources 9/28/23 Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1121 and H.R. 5616

HR 1121, the Protecting the American Energy Production Act, is straightforward: It prohibits the President from declaring a moratorium on the use of hydraulic fracturing, unless Congress authorizes the moratorium. It also expresses the sense of Congress that states should maintain primacy for the regulation of oil and gas production on state and private lands.

Natural gas is affordable, reliable, safe, clean, and abundant. It keeps the lights on when the wind is not blowing, and the sun is not shining. It can be used as feed stock to create fertilizer that nourishes the food we eat. It can be transported safely across state lines through pipelines and can be exported across the ocean to fuel our allies abroad in times of need.

The American people need natural gas, and the President should not be able to singlehandedly prohibit fracking without the consent of Congress. This Administration has been extremely hostile to fossil fuels in the midst of an energy crisis.

Also, Under current law, each State has primary regulatory authority over oil and natural gas production. This was made clear in the bipartisan Energy Policy Act of 2005. State regulatory bodies are best informed to regulate operations in their own state, this bill reaffirms that.

We are already beginning to see the consequences of poor energy policy. Blackouts are becoming normalized in states like California that have become increasingly reliant on “renewable” energy while shutting down access to reliable baseload power.

Of course, wind and solar is cheaper when the taxpayer is subsidizing the cost. Unfortunately for the ratepayer, this is a poor investment. The reality is that not all energy is the same. Wind or solar energy are simply not as valuable as the energy stored in natural gas. We need an “all-of-the-above” energy matrix that is diversified, and ensures we have baseload generation. This includes natural gas.

Factories and hospitals do not close on a cloudy day, and where “renewables” fail, natural gas can be reliably ramped up to meet demand. We do not need to go backwards. Grids do not have to be unreliable, and in 21st Century, Americans should not have to settle with blackouts. We need to build out our natural gas infrastructure in order to achieve American energy dominance, and it begins with our ability to extract it through fracking.

The Shale Revolution has launched America towards energy leadership. We became a net exporter of energy—reducing prices here at home and undercutting the leverage of our Russia (Putin), China, and OPEC. The best defense against our adversaries is more United States energy production.

The Shale Revolution also saved Americans billions of dollars. It is estimated the shale revolution saved U.S. consumers \$203 billion dollars annually, breaking down to \$2,500 per family of four.

It also lowered energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 527 metric tons per year. Innovation in the oil and gas sector has made the United States a leader in not only energy production but also emission reductions. The United States produces energy cleaner and safer than nearly anywhere in the world and we need policies that reflect this reality instead of ones that undercut our success. Natural gas is clean, affordable, and reliable and we should be increasing its production, not prohibiting it. This bill reflects this reality and would help in delivering affordable and reliable energy to Americans.

I urge support of H.R. 1121 to increase American energy production and restore energy leadership.