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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

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### Opening Statement Ranking Member Elijah E. Cummings

#### **“Rhetoric vs. Reality: Does President Obama Really Support an ‘All of the Above’ Energy Strategy?”**

**May 31, 2012**

The title of today’s hearing poses the following question: “Does President Obama Really Support an ‘All of the Above’ Energy Strategy?” In my opinion, the answer is clear, resounding, and obvious: “yes.”

Under President Obama, total domestic oil production in the United States has increased by 14% since the final year of the Bush Administration. Every year since Mr. Obama became President, total U.S. crude oil production has increased. In 2011, over two billion barrels of oil were produced in the United States. This is the highest rate of domestic oil production since 2003.

In 2011, onshore oil production on federal lands was the most productive year since 2003, with 112 million barrels produced. Offshore oil production had its most productive year in 2010, with 618 million barrels produced.

As part of this “all of the above” strategy, natural gas production is also now at record levels. In fact, it is at its highest level in 30 years, with more than 28 trillion cubic feet produced in 2011.

The Administration has also pursued nuclear power. It approved an \$8.3 billion conditional loan guarantee for nuclear reactors in Burke County, Georgia, which is the first nuclear plant to receive a construction license in more than three decades.

After touring the facility, Energy Secretary Steven Chu stated: “Nuclear energy is a critical part of President Obama’s ‘all of the above’ energy strategy.” The President has also requested an additional \$770 million for nuclear programs in his budget for 2013.

In a stark difference from the previous Administration, the Obama Administration has also invested significantly in the clean energy technologies of the future that promote our global competitiveness and enhance our energy independence.

Because of investments in solar, biofuel, wind, geothermal, and electric vehicle technologies that were included in the Recovery Act, the United States is now home to the world's largest photovoltaic generation facility, one of the world's largest wind farms, and the world's largest concentrated solar power plant.

In addition to taking these steps, the Administration's new fuel economy standards will reduce oil consumption by 2.2 million barrels a day, saving American families an average of \$8,000 at the pump.

I understand that many of the witnesses invited by the Chairman today will express their desire to drill for even more oil and to remove existing health and safety protections to allow them to do so. They will also argue that the Administration is somehow blocking their efforts.

To the contrary, arguments that the Administration has been refusing to approve drilling permits in the Gulf are a complete myth. Following the monumental BP disaster, the Administration worked quickly with industry to develop and implement new offshore drilling rules to reduce the chances that such a catastrophe would ever happen again. Since enacting these rules, the Administration has issued more than 400 deepwater drilling permits, and Gulf operations have resumed more safely as a result.

In addition, in 2011, the Administration offered 21 million acres for new offshore oil and gas development. And next month, an additional 38 million acres will be offered as part of a lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico—an area estimated to hold close to 31 billion barrels of oil and 134 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

This record is clear. President Obama has pursued an aggressive strategy to significantly boost domestic energy production from all sources—oil, natural gas, nuclear, and clean energy—and he deserves an enormous amount of credit for this accomplishment.

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