

Statement of Congressman Scott Tipton
Thursday April 26th, 2012
Before the House Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 4381, the “Planning for American Energy Act of 2012”

Thank you Mr. Chairman for convening today’s hearing on this critical package of onshore energy reform legislation including my bill, H.R. 4381.

At a time when our country needs to focus on domestic energy production and job creation, it is critical that we have an established national energy plan to meet our needs. As it stands, the Administration has no comprehensive plan for meeting the inevitable demand for energy in both traditional and alternative sources and historically, our nation has lacked a clear plan for energy development on public lands. The Planning for American Energy Act puts a common sense plan into place by requiring that our nation’s energy needs are met through development of traditional and alternative energy resources with a true all-of-the-above approach that will lower the cost of energy, jumpstart economic recovery, and get Americans working.

Currently, unpredictable leasing programs, permitting backlogs, inconsistent policies and regulations, as well as rampant litigation greatly inhibit private companies from producing energy on federally controlled lands to meet the needs of American families. This convoluted framework stymies the development of all energy sources, from oil and gas to wind, solar, and hydropower. The policies of the present Administration have rendered energy production on public lands so costly and burdensome that companies which once provided valuable jobs in the Third District of Colorado and across the West now seek out state and private lands for development. This can have a massive impact on employment numbers in districts that are largely comprised of federal lands.

Since President Obama took office total fossil fuel production has dropped 7 percent. From 2010 to 2011 total federal onshore oil and natural gas production is has decreased 13 percent and 10 percent respectively. As he campaigns around the country, President Obama continually claims that production is increasing. It is critical to note that this is attributed exclusively to production on state and private lands where the Administration’s policies do not govern energy policy. Oil production on state and private lands has risen by 11 percent and natural gas production has increased by 40 percent since 2000. These figures are particularly disconcerting at a time when rising gas prices are devastating American families and small businesses.

Similar impediments affect the wind and solar energy industries as well. During the past 4 years, the wind industry has added over 35 percent of all new generating capacity in the United States, and U.S. wind power capacity represents more than 20 percent of the world’s installed wind power. Nevertheless, due to unreliable federal policies and overregulation, the wind industry has lost 10,000 jobs since 2009 according to a recent report. Limitations on the zones in which solar development is permitted have concerned many in solar energy producers and

hindered their ability to provide additional electricity to the grid, lower costs for ratepayers, and provide clean energy jobs.

The Planning for American Energy Act would set the United States on a path for energy development that follows the most logical criteria—the needs of our people. Under the legislation, the non-partisan Energy Information Administration provides the projected energy needs of the United States for the next 30 years to the Secretary of the interior and the Secretary of Agriculture on which they then base 4 year production plans. The bill requires that all domestic sources; oil, natural gas, coal, wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, oil shale and minerals needed for energy development be included in the plan. Because local communities in districts like mine play such a large role in domestic energy production, H.R. 4381 requires that the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture solicit input from affected states, federally recognized tribes, local governments, and the public in developing each 4 year strategy.

The bottom line is that the American people need to see cheaper gasoline and energy prices, not more cheap talk from the President and his Administration. We need to put into place a sustainable energy plan in this country that responsibly advances the development of alternative and traditional resources, generates economic growth, lowers energy costs, and gets Americans working. My bill puts words into action, and would force the Administration to meet America's energy need, rather than continue to talk it to death. It's time for action.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

