

**Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
June 3, 2011  
Hearing on “The American Energy Initiative –  
A Roadmap for America’s Energy Future.”  
\*\*As Prepared for Delivery\*\***

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Today is the 9th day in our American Energy Initiative hearing. The goal of this initiative is to address the nation’s energy challenges, and we believe that the best way to do so is to expand the supply of affordable domestic energy. Unfortunately, much of this energy is either explicitly off-limits, or saddled with excessive regulatory red tape that restricts its potential. Both conventional and alternative energy sources are not being effectively utilized.

Today, we will discuss a comprehensive plan to break this logjam and enhance both the amount and the variety of domestic energy production. It is called “A Roadmap for America’s Energy Future.”

A November 2010 Congressional Research Service report concluded that America has more fossil fuel resources than any other nation on earth. In fact, when you add up the energy content of American coal, oil, and natural gas, it is more than China and Iran combined. The problem is not that the domestic conventional energy isn’t there or that it is running out, it is that too much of it has been locked away.

The Roadmap expands and streamlines the process of energy production in the federally-controlled Outer Continental Shelf. It also opens up Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, America’s single most promising onshore site where an estimated 10 billion barrels lies beneath several thousand acres at the edge of this nearly 20 million acre refuge.

The Roadmap also seeks to encourage the use of our vast reserves of coal to make transportation fuels. It does this by facilitating the construction of the nation’s first coal-to-liquids plant. It also removes the regulatory impediments to the development of oil shale on federal lands in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. In addition, the bill eliminates one key regulatory roadblock to these non-conventional sources of petroleum as well as imports of oil sands from Canada - section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.

America pioneered nuclear power, but over the last thirty years we have been hesitant to expand the use of it. The Roadmap contains provisions for jumpstarting the process of adding new nuclear generation, and does so with an eye towards encouraging state-of-the-art technologies that represent major advancements over plants built decades ago. It also provides for something the federal government currently fails to allow – a solution to long term storage of nuclear waste.

In sum, addressing the nation's many energy challenges will require bold ideas and new thinking across a wide range of domestic energy sources, and I am glad Representative Nunes brought these ideas forward.