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September 7, 2011

The Honorable Doc Hastings
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hastings:

As the House of Representatives reconvenes for the fall, the work of the Natural Resources Committee must focus on priorities that create jobs while protecting people, their communities and the natural resources that provide so much to our country. To date, the Committee's work in this area has been narrow and backward looking. Along with my Democratic Colleagues on the Committee, I stand ready to work cooperatively to move job creation legislation that will capitalize on the full range of innovative opportunities available.

Much of the Committee's work this year has focused on the continued development of fossil fuels and the false perception that the Obama administration has limited that development. In fact, last year domestic oil production from public lands was the highest it has been in nearly a decade. Meanwhile, U.S. natural gas production was at its highest level ever. The temporary pause in approving offshore oil drilling permits following the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster was a necessary interim measure to ensure that needed drilling safety measures were put into place following that disaster. What the Committee has neglected in its misplaced focus on the temporary moratorium on drilling is the need to learn from the BP oil spill and enact long-delayed necessary drill safety legislation to protect oil rig workers, our economy and the environment. Oil spills cost jobs. Tourism, fishing and other businesses have suffered tremendously from the BP spill. Preventing spills is a way to protect jobs. Despite my prior request, the CEOs of the oil companies involved in the Deepwater Horizon disaster have not yet appeared before the Committee and we have not heard from the CEOs of the major oil companies that are the industry leaders on the safety of offshore drilling. Nor has my legislation to implement the independent BP Spill Commission's recommendations had a hearing. Part of our responsibility is to respect American workers enough to protect their safety.

While the Committee has spent much time focusing on the energy sources of the past, it has missed an opportunity to support cutting-edge, clean energy technology today and into the future. The renewable resource potential of our public lands is vast and still largely untapped. Simply short-circuiting environmental review for renewable energy projects is not a renewable policy and will not unlock this renewable energy potential. We need legislative solutions that increase opportunity for American industry and workers and position them to better compete in the global clean energy race, a race China is currently winning. My Democratic colleagues and I have requested hearings on a number of bills that would do exactly that, including the Federal Renewable Energy Expansion Act (H.R. 2196), and the Clean Energy Promotion Act (H.R. 2176).

Beyond energy, our committee has a number of opportunities to spark job creation while helping to address challenging issues facing our country. Much of the southern United States is experiencing record drought conditions this year demonstrating the need to improve the efficiency of our water systems across the country. Water re-use, water recycling, and water efficiency projects help maximize the use of water, create local and sustainable water supplies, and even create jobs. Yet the Committee Majority appears to be blocking these common-sense proposals.

Younger Americans face an especially daunting challenge in finding jobs right now. Their need for employment and training can be matched with the needs of our public lands through an expansion of a successful existing jobs program as proposed in H.R. 587, the Public Lands Service Corp Act. Expanding this program to provide job training and invaluable work experience to young people, while addressing serious restoration and conservation challenges, will strengthen our workforce and our treasured public lands.

Even as news on the rebuilding of fisheries becomes increasingly positive, coastal economies continue to struggle. Moving legislation like H.R. 594, the Coastal Jobs Creation Act of 2011 would promote coastal job creation while investing in sustainable fisheries and coastal community infrastructure.

For Indian Country, the uncertainty brought on by the 2009 Supreme Court's decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar* has undermined economic development opportunities. Moving H.R. 1234, which is a straight forward clarification of the Secretary of the Interior's authority to restore tribal homelands, would eliminate jurisdictional uncertainty and support job growth in tribal economies. The Committee also needs to explore what we can do to support the economies of the insular areas under our jurisdiction, as they are buffeted by the harsh winds of the global economy.

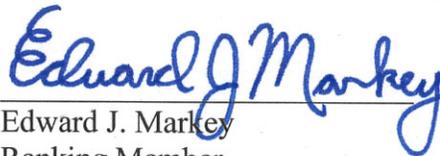
Finally, 2011 has already seen 10 extreme weather events that caused at least \$1 billion in damage each, a new record. Global warming is making extreme weather worse and changing the climate in fundamental ways. The Western water supplies will be challenged by declining

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snowpacks in the winter and increased drought in the summer. Rising sea-levels and increasing severity of storms will threaten coastal and off-shore infrastructure. Ocean acidification will undermine coral reefs and marine food sources that our fisheries and coastal communities depend on. All these will provide additional challenges to the economy and jobs. There are a number of bills in the Committee's jurisdiction that would create jobs, improve local economies and help to deal with the impacts of climate change that are already happening and prepare for those that are coming.

Certain issues within the jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Committee are inherently divisive and I look forward to energetic debate on those topics. However, putting this country back to work by capitalizing on the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the American people is not a partisan issue. It is my hope that, working together, we can contribute to the recovery this nation so desperately needs.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources