



**Opening Statement: Accountability/Reform Title**  
**Chairman Lisa Murkowski**  
**June 9, 2015**

Calling to order the Energy Committee. We are here today to consider our fourth and final legislative hearing related to the broad energy bill that we have been assembling here.

When we first started this process some weeks ago, we weren't sure exactly how these hearings would go. But I am very pleased with the strong participation from our members, the generally collegial spirit that has marked our discussions, and really the number of bills we have been able to consider throughout this process.

Counting the 42 bills that we are reviewing today, the Committee will have reviewed a total of 114 over the past several weeks. That's a significant accomplishment and the work that went into it I think will provide us with a better understanding of the many ideas for our nation's energy policy, as we sit down to craft our larger bill.

Our focus today is on a crucial area that does not always receive the attention it deserves and that is accountability and reform of our energy laws and programs.

This is an authorizing committee, and we are responsible for conducting oversight of the federal agencies within our jurisdiction. Since the last major energy bill back in 2007, we have conducted numerous oversight hearings, many of us have also discharged oversight responsibilities through initiatives within our own offices. In addition, a number of studies and reports on agency activities have been released from both the federal government and third-party entities.

Many of the bills included in this hearing reflect members' hard work on oversight – as well as our desire to ensure that federal agencies are operating effectively, efficiently, and with the highest degree of accountability.

But we will also be taking stock of our own actions here at the Committee in the coming weeks. In particular, we will be evaluating the accumulation of authorizations, programs, studies, reports and other contributions to the U.S. Code that we have made over the course of the years. In many cases, what made policy sense years ago has perhaps become outdated, been rendered duplicative, or is serving to bury federal agencies in requirements that they cannot reasonably be expected to meet. Before all is said and done, I intend to make sure that we fix those issues, and we will continue working closely with the agencies to be sure that we've done a good job.

I think as far as all the issues that we have taken up, the various policy aspects of this larger broader energy bill. An area that I believe deserves very close attention is what we already have on the books and is it doing that which we intended it to. So this opportunity for scrutiny and oversight is critically important.

With a total of 42 bills, today's hearing covers a wide range of topics. We're looking at things like addressing energy exports; permitting; our national labors; electric grid reliability; manufacturing; and loan programs just to mention a few of them.

One topic of particular importance is the ability of the United States to export its oil. As the members of this committee know, our nation is now the top oil producer in the world. Included in today's hearing is a bipartisan bill that I have introduced to lift our outdated oil exports ban.

Lifting the ban will bring an array of benefits to our nation: more jobs, more revenues, more production, more security, and more diplomatic leverage on the international stage. And you don't have to take my word for that; you can also look at the growing list of experts and studies that agree with my analysis.

In support of this bill, today, I am releasing a report that been prepared by the Committee staff that's entitled, "Rendering Vital Assistance: Allowing Oil Shipments to U.S. Allies." It has a pretty good looking cover on it. I don't think I have it with me. But it would commit it to each of the committee members here as with the other white papers that we have released. It is imminently readable. It is factually stable and sound and really lays it out in a clean and forthright measure.

The report further develops an argument that I have been making: that even while Congress works to remove the export ban, the Administration already has authority, explicitly delegated to it by Congress, to allow for greater oil exports.

In addition to this opportunity to modernize our nation's energy policies, we'll spend time looking at:

- Interagency coordination on the so-called energy-water nexus;
- Protecting electric grid reliability during agency rulemakings;
- Reforming the innovative but – at times – mismanaged loan programs at DOE;
- Making sure our National Labs are operating in the most effective manner;
- Ensuring greater cooperation between the States and Feds on energy development; as well as
- Lowering energy costs in regions that face above-average prices.

We've got a great panel before us this morning with a great breadth of knowledge and experience to speak on these and many other topics. So I thank you all for the time to be here with us this morning and am grateful for your input.

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