

Statement of Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
Ranking Democratic Member, House Committee on Natural Resources
Before the Committee on House Administration
Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Chairman Lungren, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to join with Chairman Hastings today to ask for your support for the Natural Resources Committee's budget request for the 112th Congress.

This is my 35th year on the Natural Resources Committee, but my very first year serving as its Ranking Member. The committee itself is one of the oldest committees in the House, having been originally established as the Committee on Public Lands in 1805 following the Louisiana Purchase. A lot of history resides in this committee, from the admission of States and the development of the West, to emergence of the modern conservation movement and what documentary filmmaker Ken Burns has called "America's Greatest Idea" -- our magnificent system of national parks.

Last year, the Committee was at the forefront of the Congressional investigation into the causes and consequences of the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, which claimed 11 lives, caused many more injuries, and led to an uncontrolled flow of 4.9 million gallons of oil out of the well over a period of nearly 90 days -- resulting in the worst environmental catastrophe in our nation's history.

The Committee took the lead in drafting and processing the Consolidated Land, Energy, and Aquatic Resources Act in the last Congress. Since the Senate did not approve similar legislation, the Committee has already begun considering what legislative, regulatory, and industry reforms in drilling practices are needed to prevent a repetition of the BP disaster. Chairman Hastings convened our very first hearing to receive testimony from the President's National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling. The Committee will continue its examination of these matters in the budget hearings scheduled during the next two weeks, as well as other future oversight hearings on Gulf of Mexico oil permitting and production.

The Committee has also planned an aggressive oversight agenda in many other areas within our jurisdiction. We will be reviewing the budgets and spending plans for all of the agencies within our jurisdiction. We will be examining onshore oil and gas programs, renewable and alternative energy programs, coal mining regulations and leasing, strategic and rare earth minerals, and oil shale leasing. We will be conducting oversight over the four power marketing administrations within our jurisdiction (the Bonneville Power Administration, the Western Area Power Administration, the Southwestern Power Administration, and the Southeastern Power Administration). We will be looking at issues affecting Western water supplies. We have planned hearings and investigations relating to regulation of fisheries, wildlife, and the oceans, as well as our relations with America's insular areas, issues affecting Indian Country and Native Alaskans. In addition, the Committee will continue to have both substantial responsibilities relating to oversight of the nation's national parks, forests, and other public lands.

In order to carry out this agenda effectively, we will need the Committee's support for our Budget Request. Chairman Hastings has, consistent with the prior practice of our Committee, allocated 1/3 of the personnel and salary budget to the Minority. We have also agreed to continue the practice of the Committee to employ nonpartisan shared staff responsible for certain shared financial management, administrative, and support functions out of the 2/3rd share for the Majority. We think this arrangement has been fair to both the Majority and the Minority.

In conclusion, I support Chairman Hastings' request for the Natural Resources Committee's budget and I urge its approval by the Committee.

Thank you.