

Opening Statement of the Honorable Lee Terry
Subcommittees on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade and Energy and Power
Joint Hearing on “A Competitive Edge for American
Manufacturing: Abundant American Energy”
June 20, 2013

(As Prepared for Delivery)

I am really excited to be co-chairing this hearing with my good friend, Chairman Whitfield. I have the great privilege of serving on his subcommittee in addition to chairing the Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, so I am pleased we have found common ground where our two subcommittees can work together. As we continue to learn about the abundant potential for North American energy independence, it is imperative that we leverage our resources in a responsible way to organically grow our economy through our manufacturing base, bringing jobs back to the U.S. for our Nation of Builders.

Manufacturing in the United States reached a low point in February of 2010 when there were just 11.46 million manufacturing jobs. Today, according to the National Association of Manufacturers, 12 million Americans are employed directly by the manufacturing sector. That’s only nine percent of our workforce. We’re back on a “downward trend” of job creation in the manufacturing sector. And those aren’t my words; those are from the Washington Post who says we’re “headed possibly to zero” manufacturing job growth.

While growth of the manufacturing job base has slowed to a crawl, the jobs that have been created can be directly attributed to the low price of natural gas. A cheap and plentiful supply of natural gas is a key component to lowering the cost of doing business for manufacturers.

And the reality is the cost of doing business has direct effect on job creation.

So far this year, my subcommittee, Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade, has been holding a series of hearings titled “Our Nation of Builders,” focused on the domestic manufacturing sector. We have heard from over 40 witnesses about the importance of affordable and abundant American energy, whether it be natural gas, coal or nuclear. Our energy resources give our country an advantage when attracting companies to the U.S., and we have learned about the good jobs this sector will create with an all-of-the-above energy policy.

I look forward to hearing from our panel today, and look forward to continue working on a truly all-of-the-above energy policy that will create jobs and continue to make America more competitive.

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