

Opening Statement
Ranking Member Eric Swalwell
Subcommittee on Energy
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Joint Hearing of Energy and Environment Subcommittees
“Review of Federal Hydraulic Fracturing Research Activities”

April 26, 2013

Thank you Chairman Lummis and Chairman Stewart for holding this hearing today, and I also want to thank the witnesses for being here. I appreciate the opportunity to examine the important topic of hydraulic fracturing, often called fracking, in greater detail.

I agree with those who say we need an “all of the above” approach to energy production. The emerging natural gas boom obviously provides an exciting opportunity for our nation - not to mention California - to create jobs and diversify energy options for both consumers and industry over the next several years.

That said, when it comes to fracking, we need to proceed with *extreme caution*. We have to be careful that we extract this resource safely, without inadvertently polluting either our drinking water or the environment. Of particular concern to Californians is the possibility that hydraulic fracturing might cause earthquakes. It would be very short-sighted to produce energy via fracking only to find out later that it caused such damage.

This is why I think this multi-agency effort is so important, and I applaud President Obama and his Administration for leveraging its diverse areas of expertise to determine the best practices for hydraulic fracturing going forward.

I understand that the agencies testifying today have met their internal goal of submitting a draft plan before the end of 2012, and the final plan is now in the last stages of coordination with the Office of Management and Budget.

In the meantime, this draft has already informed the President’s budget request for each of these agencies, and the important research priorities that you’ve collectively identified are being addressed even before the release of the final report as you continue to work in close coordination with each other.

I look forward to learning more about each of your efforts, discussing these important issues with you today, and reviewing the final report.