



Committee: House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
Event: [Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential](#)
Date: September 16, 2025
Time: 10:15 AM
Place: 1324 Longworth House Office Building

Member Toplines:

*Chair Paul Gosar (R-AZ-09)*¹: Gosar asserted that Alaska's oil and gas industry is the most important economic driver in the state, with development critical to both economic growth and conservation efforts. He highlighted that Alaska is home to nearly every critical mineral and emphasized that thousands of acres of land are ready for development. Gosar also criticized Democratic members for seeking to block this development and praised the Trump Administration's work to advance Alaska's resource potential.

*Ranking Member Maxine Dexter (D-OR-03)*²: Dexter highlighted that, despite being one of the nation's top oil and gas producing states, Alaska's residents still face some of the highest electricity costs and its rural communities are often forced to rely on expensive imported diesel. She argued that major fossil fuel projects like the proposed methane pipeline and oil leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are uneconomic, environmentally risky, and do little to lower local energy prices, while Alaska continues to warm faster than anywhere else in the country. Dexter stressed that clean energy projects, which have mostly been stalled by the Trump Administration, offer a more reliable path to lower energy costs.

*Full Committee Chair Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04)*³: Westerman described Alaska's vast energy and mineral wealth, noting that the state holds nearly every mineral identified as critical by the U.S. Geological Survey, along with significant timber, seafood, and recreation resources. He praised two executive orders by the Trump Administration designed to maximize Alaska's resource development; "Unleashing American Energy" ([E.O.14154](#)) and "Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential" ([E.O.14153](#)). Westerman also applauded the repeal of Alaska's Central Yukon Resource Management Plan under House-passed Resolution 106 ([H.J. Res. 106](#)), which he said would unlock development opportunities including the Alaska LNG pipeline and Ambler Road.

*Full Committee Ranking Member Jared Huffman (D-CA-02)*⁴: Huffman stressed that climate change is already displacing Alaska Native communities through rising seas and erosion, and argued that the trade-offs of new oil, gas, and mining projects often come at too high an

¹ Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution

² Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution

³ Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution

⁴ Opening statement was not available online at the time of this memo's distribution

environmental cost. He noted that much of the oil from expanded drilling would be exported rather than lowering local costs, while Alaska has significant renewable energy capacity that could reduce household bills. Huffman criticized the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA) for canceling such renewable projects, including a 300MW wind project, which he said will drive up energy costs.

Witness Toplines:

Deantha Skibinski, Executive Director, Alaska Miners Association: Skibinski highlighted that Alaska's mining industry provides high wages, supports employment in rural communities, and contributes to the economy through royalties and payments to Native corporations. She argued that further developing Alaska's mineral deposits are vital to U.S. mineral security and criticized federal efforts to block projects like the Ambler Road.

John Christensen, Tribal President, Native Village of Port Heiden, Alaska: Christensen explained that rural Alaskan communities face crippling energy costs because they are too remote to benefit from oil and gas pipelines and are forced to rely on diesel shipments from the lower 48 states. He emphasized that local renewable energy development is essential to their energy sovereignty, local job creation, and basic needs like food storage and heating, but projects have been delayed or blocked by the Trump Administration.

Clark Penney, President, Penney Capital: Penney argued that foreign entities of concern have filled the gap left by insufficient U.S. investment in critical mineral development, which undermines national security and innovation. He called for clear policies from the Departments of Energy and the Interior that prioritize domestic projects. Penney stressed that such actions would encourage private investors and strengthen the U.S. critical mineral supply chain.

Nagruk Harcharek, President, Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat: Harcharek stated that North Slope communities have too often been excluded from policymaking, learning about federal actions from the media rather than receiving direct input. He criticized the Biden Administration for prioritizing outside activists over indigenous voices and using climate change as a justification to limit local rights. Harcharek emphasized that responsible development supports self-determination and called for mutual respect and a permanent seat at the policymaking table, noting the Trump Administration had been more open to receiving Iñupiat input before making decisions.

Ethan Tyler, Senior Director of Public Policy and Lands, Aleut Corporation: Tyler highlighted Alaska's abundance of oil, gas, fisheries, renewables, and minerals, noting that their development strengthens clean energy technologies, U.S. energy independence, and national defense. He said the Aleut Corporation is partnering with private companies to develop mineral projects that support local economies and national security, and voiced support for a land exchange to make the King Cove road a reality. Tyler pointed to regulatory delays as the greatest challenge to Alaska's development, urging a balance between environmental safeguards and streamlined permitting that incorporates local knowledge and community needs.

Dutch Kuyper, Vice President of Lands and Real Estate, Cook Inlet Region Incorporated:

Kuyper emphasized that Cook Inlet Region has worked to develop fossil fuel, renewable, and mineral resources critical to national defense and advanced manufacturing. He said continued exploration and development are needed to reduce reliance on foreign countries and expand Alaska's energy base. Kuyper underscored that oil and gas development on their lands remains central to meeting growing U.S. energy demand.

Philip Wight, Associate Professor of History and Arctic & Northern Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks:

Wight argued that Alaska must pursue sustainable, all-of-the-above energy development that benefits local communities and ensures energy security and choice. He stressed that Alaskans deserve a fair share of resource wealth, rather than policies that prioritize outside interests. Wight criticized the Trump Administration's opposition to wind projects, stressing that both fossil fuels and renewables should be advanced to secure Alaska's energy future.

Clarence Clark, Owner, Southeast Alaska Resources: Clark highlighted that despite owning nearly 94 percent of the land in southeast Alaska, the federal government has severely restricted opportunities for production, with only about 2 percent available for timber harvesting. He argued that inconsistent application of the roadless rule across administrations has undermined use and made it difficult to launch projects. Clark argued that access to Alaskan old-growth timber is essential to the U.S. timber industry and national defense, calling for designated land to ensure a steady supply.

Major Takeaways:

- Republicans framed Alaska's natural resource development as central to U.S. energy independence, economic growth, and national security.
 - Gosar pointed to Alaska's vast mineral wealth and stressed that revenues from development should directly benefit Americans through proposals like his LASSO Act ([H.R. 34](#)).
 - Westerman argued that such resource revenues are vital to funding schools and hospitals in Native communities and said that permitting reform is needed to unlock Alaska's mining potential.
 - Rep. **Nick Begich** (R-AK-At Large) emphasized that Alaskans are "pro-development and pro-environment," highlighting executive orders and OBBBA provisions that open lands for critical mineral and oil and gas development.
 - He also stressed the importance of aligning education with the training needed for resource development jobs in Alaska.
 - Rep. **Tom Tiffany** (R-WI-07) highlighted that development on Alaska's North Slope has significantly improved life expectancy across Native communities.
 - He explained that resource development in Alaska is not a zero-sum game between the economy and the environment.
 - Rep. **Troy Downing** (R-MT-02) applauded expanded public land leasing and the repeal of the roadless rule as essential to reducing dependence on foreign adversaries and expanding timber and energy jobs.

- Democrats warned that large-scale fossil fuel and mining projects would not reduce costs for rural and tribal communities, while exposing them to increased environmental and climate risks.
 - Dexter argued that renewable energy, rather than imported diesel or oil, is the best path to energy independence for Native villages given their local resources.
 - She also pointed to rising sea levels and erosion caused by climate change in rural Alaska as a justification for renewable deployment.
 - Rep. **Sarah Elfreth** (D-MD-03) cautioned that profits from Alaska's resource development must not flow to U.S. adversaries and stressed the need for strict environmental standards, with local and tribal communities benefiting first.
 - Rep. **Emily Randall** (D-WA-06) criticized the Trump Administration for canceling clean energy funding, arguing that it hurt Native communities trying to deploy renewable power.
- Alaska's vast resources sparked debate over development, permitting, and balancing energy with community and environmental needs.
 - Rep. **Pete Stauber** (R-MN-08) praised the Trump Administration for reversing restrictions on Alaska's resource development and highlighted the Alaska LNG project, new mineral deposits, and the rollback of the roadless rule as promising opportunities for jobs, resource security, and conservation.
 - Huffman countered that projects like Ambler Road mining, the Alaska LNG pipeline, and NPR-A development would not address the high energy costs burdening Native communities, many of which remain disconnected from such energy infrastructure and reliant on diesel imports.
 - Begich pressed for streamlined permitting and litigation reform to shorten timelines for mining projects, arguing that current delays block critical minerals from reaching the market.