

**Opening Statement: ENR Hearing on Gasoline Prices**  
**Senator Lisa Murkowski**  
**July 16, 2013**

I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your approach on the basic structure of this hearing. I'm optimistic that our decision to look not just at gasoline prices, but a whole range of factors that could be influencing them will help to inform our policymaking options. And let me also welcome our distinguished panel of witnesses, who will provide us with valuable perspective on what it takes to recover, refine, and retail our nation's transportation fuels.

It's hard to believe that it has now been five years, almost to the day, since the price of oil rose to an all-time high of \$147 a barrel. And it's almost equally hard to believe how much has changed since then.

One of the brightest spots in our entire economy has been – and continues to be – energy production on state and private lands. After years of listening to critics contend that the United States is running out of oil, domestic production has risen by 30 percent over the past five years. That has created thousands and thousands of jobs. It has generated substantial revenues. It has slashed our OPEC imports. According to a recent analysis by the *Wall Street Journal*, it has helped reduce volatility in world oil prices. And while it is difficult to measure the precise benefit, I believe that rising American production has reduced or at the very least restrained prices at the pump.

One downside is that production on federal lands has not kept pace – it actually fell in both 2011 and 2012. That represents a huge missed opportunity. All you have to do it look to my home state of Alaska. We have more untapped oil than any other state. We have broad public support for new production. We also have a major oil pipeline that is running dry. All we ask for is permission to produce our prolific resources, but we have not been able to secure it.

Outside of production, there are some other factors that are worthy of our consideration. I look forward to a discussion of transportation and infrastructure constraints – and learning what we can do to help resolve them. I'm glad we will have a chance to hear the importance of a robust refining sector. And I'm eager to examine some of the regulations that could impact our fuel supply, in particular the Renewable Fuels Standard, which I believe Congress must reform.

Mr. Chairman, I continue to believe that we should take every step possible to reduce and stabilize fuel prices for American families and businesses. That will include increasing production on federal lands, increasing the efficiency of our vehicles, and increasing the use of alternatives. It will mean rejecting, rather than seeking, punitive tax hikes. It will require the timely approval of needed projects – including the Keystone XL pipeline – and the prompt adjustment of any regulation that comes in conflict with our desire for abundant and affordable energy.

Again, a warm welcome to our witnesses. I am glad you are with us today to help us sort through these important issues.