Eight facts about oil and gas development and why it should matter to Rep. Scott Tipton

With oil and gas booming, Rep. Scott Tipton should use his position as Chairman of the House Small Business Committee Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade to protect small businesses and communities once the wells run dry – such as the outdoor recreation industry which contributes $730 billion nationally and $10 billion in Colorado to the economy.

Instead, he will hold a field hearing on Monday, September 19th in Grand Junction, Colo. to attack protections for air and water quality, wildlife, and public lands, all to advance the interests of the mining and oil and gas industries that donate to his campaigns.

Our tourism and recreation industries depend on responsible energy development and clean air, clean water, and healthy lands to thrive. Advancing one industry at the expense of another is bad policy and lacks common sense. We can both develop our energy resources while maintaining strong protections for our environment.

The oil and gas industry does not need any more government handouts. Here are eight facts about energy development that should matter to Rep. Tipton and be included during Monday's debate. Since no public testimony is allowed these facts are not likely to be presented.

1. Oil and gas companies receive $15 billion in special tax breaks.

Taxpayers for Common Sense outlined over $15 billion each year in special tax breaks to the oil and gas industry.

According to their analysis, Coloradans contribute over $251 million annually to federal oil and gas subsidies.

2. About 57 percent of lands leased to oil and gas companies for development – covering 21.6 million acres – are idle.

Industry has plenty of access to public lands. The U.S. Department of Interior released a report earlier this year outlining the unused leases.

In Colorado, that report showed that industry had yet to develop 68 percent of its leases.

3. Industry has yet to develop 7,000 drilling permits.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management recently testified in committee that the oil and gas industry has about 7,000 undeveloped permits where industry has a green light to drill.

The same is true in Colorado. Last year, for every three drilling permits issued for public lands in Colorado, industry started only one new drilling well.

4. **For the last two years, the BLM has approved more drilling permits than applications it has received.**
The BLM has actually been clearing the backlog of permits not processed by the Bush administration and processing those permits at its highest rate in nearly a decade.

5. **Business is booming for the oil and gas industry.**
The top five oil and gas companies made over $67 billion in profits the first half this year.

Colorado operator, Anadarko Petroleum, posted a $562 million profit compared to a $28 million net loss just one year ago.

6. **Drilling activity is reaching record levels in the U.S.**
Oil and gas activity is back to pre-recession levels and actually nearing a 20-year high. In fact, there are more active drill rigs in the United States than all other countries combined. The national boom is being driven by higher prices at the pump, encouraging development of shale oil plays like the Bakken in North Dakota.

Analysis by the Checks and Balances Project of Baker Hughes data from January 1990 through May 2011 shows Colorado drilling activity is 60 percent above its 20-year average.

7. **The oil and gas industry is adding 10,000 jobs a month.**
Despite the reported jobs slowdown last month, in 2011 the oil and gas industry has been adding roughly 10,000 jobs per month on average. In fact, *The Wall Street Journal* reported that energy jobs are at a two-decade high and that industry is worried about a shortage of skilled workers.

The Denver Post reported "from the recession's end in July 2009 to July 2011, the Colorado energy sector added 5,100 jobs."

8. **The United States is a net-exporter of petroleum products.**
While it may sound unbelievable, over the last six months the United States has exported more petroleum products than it's imported. That includes the crude oil we important abroad and the refined gasoline and diesel we sell to neighboring countries. Experts attribute this to reduced demand for oil in the United States to the economic downturn and increasingly fuel-efficient cars on the road.