Thank you, David [Leebron, President, Rice University] and thank you for inviting me here today. It’s great to be at one of the greatest universities in the nation.

Rice University is a Texas treasure and an important part of our stature as leader in energy, technology, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Today, Texas is a leader in so many areas, like job creation, with 166,000 jobs created so far this year. Like exports and population growth and we’re America’s top state for business, according to CNBC.

But before we were known for jobs and opportunity, Texas was known for energy.

In fact, our state still leads the nation in crude and natural gas production and we’ve expanded our energy portfolio to be the top state in wind energy production.

In short, America runs on Texas energy. Texas needs energy jobs to feed our families, build our businesses, endow our cultural arts, and fund our education system.

Unfortunately, we are entering an uncertain time in Texas energy. And much of that uncertainty is man-made in Washington, D.C.
There was a time when the biggest threat to our energy industry was foreign competition but I sincerely believe that the biggest challenge facing you all today is a federal government that ends up doing more harm than good when it tries to ‘help’.

Now, don't get me wrong: I do believe that governments have an essential role to play when it comes to safety but Washington’s attempt to become the “be all, end all” is a harmful effort that will not end well.

Consider the EPA’s efforts to undermine the success Texas has attained with our approach to clean air permitting by pushing to overrule a state process that has effectively improved air quality. It is clear that Washington is committed to putting process and control ahead of results.

We can't seem to blame partisanship, because our state’s 16-year-old clean air permitting program was put into place under Gov. Ann Richards and approved by the Clinton Administration.

Instead, I fault the natural tendency of big government to seek new places to “be useful” then apply one-size-fits-all solutions that don't really work.

They’re taking that very approach in blowing up a program that has made Texas a national leader in cleaning the air slashed ozone levels 22% and reduced NOx gas emissions by 53% since 2000.

During the same time period, ozone levels across the country have dropped just 8% and NOx emissions by just 27%.

Our major cities are meeting the 1997 eight-hour ozone standard with the exception of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, which is within 1 part per billion of compliance.

Today, every county in Texas is within federal standards for fine particulate matter which target pollutants with the greatest effect on human health.

Even more impressive, these improvements happened while our population grew by 3.9 million new people we added more private sector jobs than any other state and our economy grew 50% faster than the nation as a whole.

That's why the EPA’s action against Texas, Texas jobs and Texas communities is hard to explain…as is their now-infamous endangerment finding on carbon dioxide.

When the EPA declared CO2 a toxic substance, and rolled out plans to regulate any entity producing more than 250 tons of it per year we pointed out the fact that included countless businesses, farms and even large churches. So, they quickly backtracked, saying they'd only focus on power plants and large industrial facilities for the next five years which probably wasn’t very reassuring to the hundreds of thousands of Texans working
in the energy industry or the homeowners, employers and consumers that would end up paying much higher gasoline and electricity prices.

So, in pursuit of our state's best interests, I supported Attorney General Abbott's decision to take our challenge to federal court.

Now, I wish I could say the EPA is the only major threat emanating from Washington these days but the White House has other allies in this game including the Department of the Interior that has been trying to get a deepwater drilling moratorium to stick.

While they continue their battle in the courts, some companies are moving their rigs to Africa and Americans are wondering how they'll replace the 30 million barrels that will be lost in the course of a six-month moratorium.

Now, I'm an Aggie, so I tend to view things coming out of LSU with a cynical eye, but it's hard to debate their recent report that projected the impact of a moratorium on Texas.

According to their research, it would cost Texas a $633 million decrease in economic output, 2,492 lost jobs and $153 million in lost earnings for Texas workers.

Continuing Washington's fascination for the one-size-fits-all Congress is now considering legislation that would allow the federal government to dictate how states regulate energy production within their borders.

That is a very bad idea.

The fact is that Texans simply care more about our environment, our safety, and our economic well-being than Washington ever will.

Just as Texas led the way in energy production in the last century, we can lead the way in improving energy safety and security ... and developing renewable energy sources in the 21st Century. If Washington, DC would free the states to innovate and compete our nation as a whole would be much better off.

I truly believe that's what our nation's founders thought. The Tenth Amendment holds that "powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Here in Texas, we have followed four simple concepts in creating such a climate that has made our economy the envy of the nation.

First, we don't spend all the money so we have resources in the event of a rainy day.

Second, we've pursued a predictable regulatory climate, so that employers don't get whipsawed by unexpected changes.

Third, we reformed our legal system to cut down on an epidemic of over-suing that was killing jobs and driving doctors out of medicine.

Fourth, we have made our schools more accountable, so that our future workforce is better prepared to
compete in the global marketplace.

Our common-sense approach works because it frees our citizens to pursue their dreams, create jobs and generate prosperity.

As a result, Texas is moving in the right direction cleaning our air supplying energy for the nation creating jobs and growing fast all at the same time.

I much prefer the approach we are taking here in Texas to the top-down, take-over approach of Washington, D.C.

Rather than a moratorium I’ll stick with the creation of the Gulf Project which I announced a few weeks ago a consortium of the brightest minds in Texas academia – including the National Corrosion Center here at Rice along with private and public sector experts all coming together to address the issues raised by the Deepwater Horizon situation.

We need new techniques and facilities to test the safety and reliability of current and next-generation equipment.

We also need new technology to better monitor wells while they’re being drilled and while they’re in production.

We need better technology to control and minimize any spills that might happen and better resources for our spill management teams.

I much prefer our approach, because it gets the experts in the same room leverages our state’s unique blend of science and experience pursues solutions that create jobs and actually solve a real problem.

Texans can do it, just as we always have, thorough hard work, innovation and common-sense.

If our friends in Washington would get out of the way….or at least step aside Texans will have cleaner air and environmental quality and safer energy production…and we’ll continue to produce the traditional and renewable energy America needs to grow and succeed.

As a Texan, I’m an optimist and I know that Texas will continue to provide the leadership and energy our nation needs.

Thank you for all your contribution to that noble effort.

May God bless you and, through you, may He continue to bless the great state of Texas.