Statement By Rep. Paul Gosar (Arizona – 4) before the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Member Day November 14, 2019 at 2:00 pm in 1300 Longworth HOB

Madam Chair and Ranking Member, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to present recommendations to move America forward creating a stronger more secure future. I am Rep. Paul Gosar and I represent the Fourth District of Arizona as well as the current Chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus.

Regardless of your position on the issues before this Committee we all know that America will need to build more electricity generation and transmission and will face a greater demand for critical minerals and the land access that this development demands. In my testimony today I will highlight the challenges and opportunities that we face in bringing this energy future to fruition.

PLREDA -

The first bill I would like to highlight is my bill HR 3794, the Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act. Joining me supporting this bill are such radical conservatives as Rep. Jared Huffman and Rep. Raul Grijalva. Renewable energy sources like wind, solar and geothermal are an integral part of the United States' all-of-the-above energy strategy. Our nation's public lands can play a critical role in supporting that mission. While approximately 40% of total geothermal electric generating capacity comes from federal lands, only about 5% of total utility-scale wind energy capacity and utility-scale solar energy capacity comes from public lands.

This bipartisan bill develops a streamlined process that will drive investment towards the highest quality renewable sources. This legislation uses upfront planning and careful siting to identify appropriate areas for wind, solar and geothermal energy. In addition, PLREDA incentivizes development in these lower-conflict priority areas, while ensuring impacts to wildlife, habitat and cultural resources are avoided and minimized. The bill also directs agencies to provide staffing resources to ensure project permitting moves forward as efficiently as possible.

I would encourage committee members to join in support of this legislation and help us see it enacted soon.

TRANSMISSION AND GENERATION –

American demand for electricity is growing and everything from smart phones to electric cars will continue to increase our domestic demand for electricity. Recent efforts by cities and states to ban household use of natural gas will only exacerbate our demand for electricity. That demand growth will put increase pressure on our need for increased transmission capacity and the massive challenges of building significant new energy projects. As we have seen, poor environmental planning and maintenance can have devastating impacts on transmission particularly in rural areas susceptible to wildfires.

Beyond that, the simple process of building and installing any new significant construction is riddled with massive challenges and problems.

It is important to consider what it takes to build new transmission. I present a case from my home state, the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project consists of 520 miles of two single-circuit 500 kV transmission lines to connect and deliver electricity generated in Arizona and New Mexico to population centers in the Desert Southwest.

This was a project built specifically to meet the demand for renewable energy from populations further West. In order to build these lines, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), along with fourteen cooperating agencies, led the effort to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). That process started in 2008, was completed after a six and half year effort to comply with NEPA finalizing on January 23, 2015, when BLM issued a Record of Decision approving SunZia's application for a right-of-

way across federally owned property. Again, a single transmission line, servicing only renewable energy needed nearly 7 years of environmental review under NEPA.

But it isn't just transmission, pipelines in America are facing massive obstacles as well and construction and operation of more pipelines will be critical to a cleaner future. The prompt approval of pipelines for methane capture and distribution can prevent flaring and methane emissions while providing clean natural gas for markets and industrial use. In addition, new pipelines for carbon capture and reuse will provide us new opportunities for both carbon sequestration and enhanced oil recovery.

And it isn't just power distribution but generation as well, right now offshore in the Atlantic the Vineyard Wind project has been in the NEPA process for 18 months. This summer the Administration was required to delay the NEPA approval to conduct additional cumulative impact assessments on offshore wind's impact on fisheries. This action was driven in part by a request from the Rhode Island Congressional delegation that asked, 17 months into the NEPA process, for a 2-year delay for a baseline fishing research study. It is nearly impossible for new massive investment of capital to come into the United States when the NEPA process is so fundamentally broken.

MINERALS –

Finally, the last issue of my focus today is that of critical minerals. As the need more electricity in our future, we will need more critical minerals like cobalt, lithium and copper and access to rare earths and helium.

Today, we have allowed our domestic rare earth mines to be closed, shredding our domestic security by forcing our industrial and Defense apparatus to depend on Chinese rare earth materials. In May of 2019, President Xi Jinping (zhe – jingping) made a visit to the heart of China's critical minerals industrial complex. He stated during this visit, "We are here at the starting point of the Long March to remember the time when the Red Army began its journey. We are now embarking on a new Long March, and we must start all over again."

His words came a week after Chinese state media proposed the idea of completely banning critical mineral exports to the United States. Currently, the United States relies on China for 20 different critical minerals which include several rare earth materials defined by the Department of Defense. This irrational overreliance threatens our national security by imperiling our ability to make equipment and weapons integral to mission success. Rare earth materials are used in numerous modern technologies including missile guidance and control systems, lasers for enemy mine detection, satellite communications, radar, sonar on submarines, iPhones, electric vehicles, wind turbines, solar panels, computers and networks.

But it isn't just rare earths that threaten our security, it is our complete position on domestic mining. From the Rosemont Mine and Resolution Copper projects in Arizona, to Twin Metals in Minnesota and numerous projects across Alaska, Wyoming and Nevada. Our nation needs more copper, zinc and cobalt to achieve a cleaner energy future. Yet the permitting process for these projects is measured in hundreds of millions of dollars and decades of permitting. It faces reckless legislating from Congress working to pass moratoriums on mineral development, undo land exchanges passed by the will of the people. Effort after effort to undercut the domestic development of the resources to secure our nation. If we want a more reliable electric future, we will need these minerals. The choice is clear, support more mining and an electrified future or simply serve word salad to gullible activists while fundamentally failing to take the necessary steps to secure America.

CLOSING -

Finally, in closing, the United States is the greatest CO2 success story on the planet. The Paris agreement was nothing more than an effort to extort America to pay the world for a sin created by an international bureaucratic cabal. We have lead the world in CO2 reduction and we should work to export our success to the rest of the world with more LNG to Europe and allies in Asia.