



HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE  
**CLIMATE CRISIS**

**Opening Statement of Chair Kathy Castor  
Hearing on “Cost-Saving Climate Solutions:  
Investing in Energy Efficiency to Promote Energy Security and Cut Energy Bills”  
April 7, 2022**

*As prepared for delivery*

On Monday, the world’s top scientists, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, issued another stark wake-up call. We’re behind, we’re late, and we are running out of time to limit warming and avoid catastrophic impacts and rising costs. And unless we dramatically ramp up efforts to expand clean energy and reduce heat-trapping pollution, the consequences will be bleak.

America has the clean technologies needed to avoid these costly impacts. But unless Congress deploys them with urgency, in partnership with innovators and entrepreneurs and across the economy, Americans will be forced to pay more and more.

The economic case for cost-saving clean energy and energy efficiency innovations is clear. In fact, the very first recommendation in our committee’s Climate Crisis Action Plan is maximizing energy efficiency, one of the most cost-effective solutions for nearly all sectors of our economy. By making our transmission lines more efficient, we can expand the reach of affordable renewables. By making vehicles more fuel-efficient and deploying electric cars and trucks and fleets, we can save Americans money at the pump and avoid the volatility of global oil and gas markets. And by investing in energy efficiency and electrification upgrades, we can drive down the costs of keeping the lights on, keeping appliances running, and keeping the temperature agreeable inside and out.

Here’s one example of how electrification can dramatically improve efficiency. According to the Department of Energy, electric vehicles use more than 75% of the energy they get from the grid to get your wheels moving, whereas gas vehicles only use about 12 to 30% of the energy from gasoline. In other words, when you charge up your electric car, you’ll use three-quarters of that energy to get to where you’re going. But when you fill up your tank, you’re using less than a quarter. So that \$40 you paid at the pump? Just \$10 of it gets you moving – and the rest is wasted.

Beyond the cost-saving potential, investing in cleaner, cheaper technologies will also go a long way in building true American energy independence and security. Clean energy investments support American workers, American industries, and American manufacturers – instead of supporting foreign dictators and Big Oil CEOs. By maximizing these savings, we can reinvest them to strengthen our most vulnerable communities. And we can deploy transformative energy-efficient technologies that could potentially reduce heat-trapping pollution by between 50% and 80% by the year 2050.

Federal investment in energy efficiency will put money back in the pockets of Americans. The average household could save up to \$500 a year with the investments in the House-passed reconciliation bill. Going even further would save households even more; by electrifying everything, we could save families thousands of dollars every year and cut their energy use in half. Those extra savings would be a godsend for Americans, especially those least able to afford their energy costs.

There's a common theme here: the costs of climate change and the rising costs of energy seem to always fall on working families. While oil and gas companies are reaping record profits, Americans are paying more at the pump for last century's fuels. Meanwhile, their communities are the ones suffering the economic harms of climate-fueled disasters, which cost more than \$145 billion just last year. For too many Americans, it's hard not to feel like they're getting ripped off.

That's why President Biden is working to lower energy costs and expand clean technologies. The Biden administration is working to update energy conservation standards for appliances, and to modernize energy codes for federal buildings. They're also working to deploy the investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which included more than \$3 billion to make homes more energy efficient and lower costs. Thanks to the infrastructure law, we are also poised to build a national network of 500,000 EV charging stations, with the goal of making them as readily available as gas stations.

As we stare down the barrel of a costly climate catastrophe, there's much more we must do. And the world's top scientists offered a hopeful note in their report that reinforces the action we see across America: we have the talent, the innovations, the tools, and technology to save consumers money, reduce pollution, and provide a livable planet for future generations. So I look forward to the insight of our witnesses and our committee's discussion.