

NO FLAME, MORE PAIN: HOW STATE AND LOCAL BANS ON NATURAL GAS INCREASE COSTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH,
ENERGY POLICY, AND REGULATORY
AFFAIRS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENERGY POLICY, AND
REGULATORY AFFAIRS

Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m., Room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eric Burlison, [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Burlison, Palmer, Higgins, Perry, Boebert, Frost, Ansari, and Min.

Mr. BURLISON. This hearing of the Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs will come to order. I want to welcome everyone today.

And without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time. And I recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN ERIC BURLISON
REPRESENTATIVE FROM MISSOURI**

Again, welcome to this hearing, hosted today by the Subcommittee for Oversight. Today, this Subcommittee will examine energy choice, focusing on the consequences of bans and restrictions on the use of natural gas and other fossil fuels. These are policies long championed by Congressional Democrats that are being pursued by blue states and localities.

High electricity costs are one of the top affordability concerns that Americans have today. Since 2020, electricity prices have skyrocketed, straining the budgets of everyday Americans. Meanwhile, natural gas has remained an affordable and reliable form of energy for American households. Americans across our country rely on and prefer natural gas to heat their homes, cook their meals, and often to operate a small business. Natural gas is also a key component of our electrical power generation.

Over the last several years, the Biden Administration and Congressional Democrats sought to force Americans away from natural gas and other fossil fuels and toward electrification. The Biden Administration finalized sweeping environmental regulations, which

pressured utilities to retire fossil fuel electric power generation capacity, which ultimately strained our electric grid.

The Biden Administration also adopted a slew of burdensome regulations that aimed to ban many gas home appliances. Additionally, the Wasteful Inflation Reduction Act, championed by Congressional Democrats and the Biden Administration, poured billions of dollars into incentivizing electrification.

At the Subcommittee's previous proceeding, we discussed how such policies play into the strengths of our foreign adversaries and fail to benefit working American families. Congressional Republicans have successfully repealed a number of these regulations and repealed the IRA's wasteful spending. The Trump Administration is likewise rolling back appliance-killing standards and regulations that aim to eliminate fossil fuel-fired power generation. And courts have overturned the Biden Administration's natural gas-powered appliance bans, calling them attempts to make home appliances more expensive and less useful.

However, to help achieve their nationwide aims, Democrat-led states and localities, spurred on by radical climate activists, are still implementing their own bans on natural gas in many types of buildings. For example, this city, Washington D.C., our Nation's capital, is planning on implementing at the end of the year a ban on natural gas in new commercial buildings, certain newly constructed residential buildings, and large renovations. This is highly concerning, and I hope that this Committee can do something about it.

Our Federalist system, of course, gives states the authority to make such ignorant laws, including banning bad laws governing interstate energy. In fact, when I was a Missouri State senator, I led the effort and passed legislation to ensure that Missourians were not subject to natural gas bans or other limitations to energy choice.

However, those sorts of bans have broader effects beyond just those states. These bans are being litigated in the courts with the Ninth Circuit ruling that Federal law preempts states' building codes and restrictions on energy sources. These bans are projected to massively increase electricity demand, shifting the entire energy demand burden for heating and cooking during the winter months to an already stretched power grid. Such bans will not only raise energy prices in the states in which they are enacted, but they also will increase demand for electricity from neighboring grids and regional transmission organizations, raising already high prices in those other states.

Importantly, these bans will hurt families, particularly poor families who are struggling with their energy bills. Additionally, natural gas bans will limit appliance choice for many American families, increasing costs and altering the broader appliance marketplace. They will also make housing construction more expensive, which will only exacerbate the existing home affordability crisis, which is well-documented to spill over from one state into the other.

According to the analysis from the National Association of Home Builders, in colder climates, full electrification adds \$15,000 to the cost of constructing a new home. During this past winter, nation-

wide households with electric heating saw average seasonal bills of more than \$1,200 to keep their homes warm, compared to just over \$700 in homes that were heating with natural gas. Additionally, the American Gas Association estimates that households save more than \$66 per month when using gas versus an electric appliance.

Republicans believe in energy choice, appliance freedom, and energy affordability, while Democrats are trying to ban reliable and affordable energy sources like natural gas and force green energy mandates upon Americans to satisfy radical climate activists. While these various blue state policies may seem isolated, these mandates are really a coordinated nationwide effort to work around Democrat failures to impose such mandates at the Federal level—simply put, a nationwide workaround dressed in local clothing.

At a time of sky-high electricity prices and increasing threats to the reliability and security of America's electric grids, the last thing the American people need is a wave of natural gas bans.

And with that, I yield to Ranking Member Frost for his opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER
MAXWELL FROST, REPRESENTATIVE FROM FLORIDA**

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much to our witnesses for being here today.

I am glad to be here to have the opportunity to discuss a very important subject, rising energy costs and their role in the crisis and the fact that no one can afford anything in America. My Republican colleagues need to face the facts. Energy costs are not drastically increasing because of a small handful of states and localities that have implemented laws that promote electrification and reduce the use of fossil fuels. It is the Trump Administration and corporations that are driving up energy costs for Americans.

Despite claiming to want to lower costs, President Trump has spent billions of dollars to cancel energy projects that would have lowered costs for the average family. The Trump Administration has canceled funding for clean-energy projects that would have produced enough electricity to power the equivalent of 17 million homes. Canceling these projects do not just push prices higher, it cuts jobs and threatens our Nation's long-term energy security.

And to make matters worse, the One Big Beautiful Bill ended the residential tax credits that were lowering energy bills for millions of working families across the country. Without clean energy from domestic sources, we are exposed to global energy shocks and changes within the market, which families are feeling today.

And while President Trump is increasing costs for the average American and threatening our security, he is working to make his friends richer. The Trump Administration's latest deal to cancel offshore wind projects and drive investment into a liquefied natural gas project is going to generate a massive payday for one of his friends from Mar-a-Lago.

As we discussed in this Subcommittee last year, the growing use of AI is powered by data centers that use an incredible amount of electricity. This electricity's demand constrains cities' grids, and data centers can jeopardize the quality of life for Americans who live near them. But President Trump sees no problem with this. In

fact, earlier this week, he posted that all communities should embrace data centers, and if they do not, they will end up, “backwards and poor.” President Trump is either completely unaware or completely ignoring the fact that data centers can significantly drive up a community’s energy costs. One grid operator which covers a region with data center hubs saw their prices increase by over 1,000 percent because of the increased demand, a price increase that will be passed along to working families.

President Trump wants to “let data reign,” prioritizing corporations and AI companies over making sure our communities are affordable and the health and security of Americans, an incredibly unpopular take, by the way, from both Democrats and Republicans across the country.

Since the start of Trump’s second term, household electricity bills have increased 16 percent nationally. And President Trump’s reckless decision to have this war in Iran continues to have consequences that harm the American people. Fuel prices have skyrocketed thanks to Trump’s war, and Americans are paying the price at the gas pump. Gas prices are averaging over \$4 a gallon as of August. Diesel prices have been going up even higher, averaging around \$5 a gallon. And since the war’s start, American consumers have shouldered almost \$95 billion in additional fuel costs. Besides the tremendous human toll this war has taken, there is a real cost on families here at home.

And this war is not the only source of increasing costs for Americans. President Trump also pushed forward this failed tariff policy that has been wreaking havoc on our economy. While the President has repeatedly insisted that foreign countries pay the price for his Liberation Day tariffs, American consumers and businesses are actually footing about 90 percent of the bill. And some of the biggest corporations in this Nation got to double dip. They charged us more for all these products. Courts ruled that the tariffs were illegal. Then the government gave those same corporations checks for what we paid. These tariffs drive up energy and food costs, and American households can expect to pay over \$1,000 extra costs per year as a result.

President Trump recently announced that 50 percent tariffs on goods from Canada will continue to drive up prices for Americans. Tariffs on lumber and other building materials will increase construction costs and make the housing affordability crisis even worse. These tariffs and trade wars impact energy prices by freezing investments in new energy projects, driving up construction costs, and delaying projects. But this seems to be exactly what the President wants since he has cut clean energy projects that would have helped alleviate costs for consumers.

President Trump and Congressional Republicans pretend to care about affordability for the American people, but they are simultaneously implementing reckless tariffs, starting illegal wars, cutting critical projects, and making energy costs soar. Costs have not gone down for working families since Trump has taken office; they have gone up. And if this Administration and Congressional Republicans actually care about lowering costs for energy, instead of sitting here talking about a few states that have implemented a few rules,

they should be bringing back tax credits that were lowering energy bills for millions of families.

They should bring back clean energy projects that were making energy more affordable and more accessible. They should stop trying to force data centers on our communities across the country. They should stop imposing reckless tariffs that just end up costing American consumers and businesses even more money. And they should stop supporting illegal foreign wars that raise prices here at home.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you, Ranking Member Frost.

First, I want to welcome our witnesses. We have Michael Fazio, who is the executive director of the New York State Builders Association, where he leads advocacy efforts to expand housing production, promote homeownership, and housing affordability, and strengthen New York's residential construction industry. He also has held several leadership positions with the National Association of Home Builders, who he is representing in his testimony today.

Next, we have James Conde, a partner at Boyden Gray, specializing in energy, environmental, and administrative law and regulation. Mr. Conde is representing the Prime Mover Institute in his testimony.

And next, we have Patrick McCormick, who served as chief counsel to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the U.S. Senate from the 112th to the 119th Congress. During his tenure, he provided expert counsel on legislation and agency oversight related to energy policy and all other committee matters.

And last, we have Dr. Pete Wyckoff, who is the vice president for policy at Evergreen Action.

Thank you, gentlemen, for all joining us today, and I look forward to your testimonies.

And with that, pursuant to the Committee rule 9(g), will the witnesses please stand and raise their right hand?

Do you solemnly swear to affirm that the testimony that you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. FAZIO. I do.

Mr. CONDE. I do.

Mr. MCCORMICK. I do.

Dr. WYCKOFF. I do.

Mr. BURLISON. Let the record show that the witnesses have answered in the affirmative. Thank you, and you can take your seats.

Again, we appreciate you being here today and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind you, I think you all know how the lights work. Please limit your oral statements to 5 minutes, and please remember to press the button. Otherwise, we will not be able to hear you, and it will not be watched by the millions who watch these hearings on C-SPAN.

And with that, I will now recognize Mr. Fazio for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MR. MIKE FAZIO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NEW YORK STATE BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS**

Mr. FAZIO. Chairman Burlison, Ranking Member Frost, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Michael Fazio, and I serve as the executive director of the New York State Builders Association, and I am here today on behalf of the National Association of Home Builders.

Our industry is on the frontlines of a housing affordability crisis. Families are struggling to afford homes, and we simply are not building enough housing to meet that demand. Energy mandates that increase the cost of construction only make that problem worse. For a family trying to qualify for a mortgage, every dollar matters. NHB estimates that just a \$1,000 increase in the cost of a median new home would price approximately 156,000 families out of the market. That is why energy choice matters.

NHB supports improving energy efficiency. Today's new homes are substantially more efficient than homes built in prior decades, and builders continue to incorporate new technologies in construction practices.

When it comes to how a home is powered, government should not be picking winners and losers. Families should be able to choose the energy sources and appliances that work best for their homes and their budgets. Some may choose electricity. Others may choose natural gas or propane. Those options should compete based upon cost, performance, reliability, and what families actually want.

That choice is being taken away in my home state. New York became the first state in the country to prohibit natural gas and other fossil fuels in most new buildings. As someone who represents the state's homebuilding industry, I see firsthand what that means for builders and home buyers. In colder climates, fully electrifying a new home can add more than \$15,000 in construction costs. For a family already struggling to afford a home, that can be the difference between qualifying for a mortgage and being priced out altogether. A family may want to build an all-electric home, and builders can certainly do that, but families should also be able to choose natural gas and other sources when it is more affordable or better meets their needs.

Affordability is only part of the equation. Reliability matters as well. New York is already facing growing electricity demand and constraints on its generation and energy infrastructure. As we ask the grid to power more of our homes and our economy, we need to be confident it can reliably meet that demand, especially when temperatures drop and energy needs are at their highest.

The December 2022 Buffalo blizzard showed how serious the consequences can be when families lose power and heat during extreme weather. That storm brought extreme cold, hurricane-force winds, heavy snow, and widespread power outages. Emergency responders struggled to reach people, and 47 people lost their lives in Buffalo as a result of this storm.

That experience underscores why maintaining a diverse mix of energy sources is so important, and the lesson extends beyond extreme weather. As electricity demand grows, it has become increasingly clear that meeting our energy needs will require an all-of-the-

above approach that includes renewables, nuclear power, natural gas, propane, and other technologies.

We clearly need more energy. We need more reliable energy. We need more affordable energy. Families should be able to decide how they heat their homes and cook their food. Builders should have the flexibility to meet the needs of their customers and their communities. We can make homes more efficient while preserving the choices families value. We should not make housing less affordable, less reliable, or less attainable in this process.

Thank you, and I look forward to any questions you may have.

Mr. BURLISON. Now, I recognize Mr. Conde for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MR. JAMES CONDE, PARTNER
BOYDEN GRAY PLLC, PRIME MOVER INSTITUTE**

Mr. CONDE. Chairman Burlison, Ranking Member Frost, and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is James Conde, and I am a partner at Boyden Gray PLLC, a boutique law firm in Washington, D.C. I am testifying today on behalf of the Prime Mover Institute, a 501(c)(3) organization that advocates to expand access to all technologies that power the American standard of living, including gas-powered appliances owned by millions of American homeowners and businesses.

In today's network home, American homeowners and businesses have a wide variety of choices in appliances. Americans generally choose whatever combination works best for them, and often, but not always, that means choosing gas. In recent years, however, governments at all levels have been pulling every policy lever to squash full choice. Start with the Biden Administration's misuse of the 1975 Energy Policy and Conservation Act, or EPCA. EPCA authorizes the Department of Energy to set energy efficiency standards for most households and many industrial appliances. In recent years, however, the Department of Energy has misused this old law to push electrification by, as the Chairman put it, making gas appliances less useful and more expensive.

Let me give you a specific example. If you are like me or millions of other Americans and you live in an old home and use gas for heating, you probably own a non-condensing gas furnace. These furnaces are already very efficient, about 80 percent efficient, and crucially for many Americans, these furnaces can vent their exhaust gases through an existing chimney using natural draft. Condensing furnaces, the alternative, are more efficient because they pull additional heat from exhaust gases, but condensing furnaces cannot use an existing chimney. Instead, a condensing furnace requires a dedicated PVC vent and plumbing for the liquid condensation it generates.

For many Americans, such as those living in rowhomes, installing a non-condensing furnace may be infeasible. For millions of others, it would require punching new holes through an exterior wall, sacrificing storage space, or undertaking costly home renovations.

In 2023, the Department of Energy nevertheless promulgated an energy efficiency standard that effectively bans non-condensing gas furnaces from the market, starting in 2027. As a result, millions

of Americans would be pushed to switch to electric heat pumps. Indeed, that was the goal of the rule, which the Department touted as a regulatory benefit.

That is not supposed to happen under EPCA as Congress enacted it. Congress wrote several guardrails into EPCA to protect consumer choice in appliances. First, the Department cannot set standards that effectively ban gas appliances. Second, beyond this, the Department cannot ban a class of products which features that consumers find useful. The rule mandating condensing gas furnaces violates at least the second requirement, if not the first. Venting through an existing chimney as opposed to punching a hole and venting through an exterior vent is obviously useful to many Americans, as the Department of Energy under the Trump Administration has now conceded in the litigation.

EPCA's legal protections are also relevant to the state and local gas bans we are discussing today. EPCA broadly prohibits "any state regulation concerning the energy use of a gas appliance." As the Ninth Circuit explained in the city of Berkeley decision, this preempts direct or indirect state and local efforts to ban gas appliances, including through the use of building codes.

The issue is certainly important. Many state and local governments, not just New York, have adopted building codes that ban gas appliances. That includes D.C.; Montgomery County; Washington State; Denver, Colorado; and multiple other local governments.

But these bans go beyond building codes. The Air Districts in the South Coast and Bay Areas of California have pioneered a new type of ban now called a zero-emission standard for appliances that applies to—including to existing replacements, not just affecting new buildings. Because combusting gas inevitably involves some emissions, this is effectively the same as saying that appliances cannot use gas, which EPCA prohibits. These bans, these zero-emissions bans, are now being considered by dozens of state and local jurisdictions.

I look forward to your questions.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

I now recognize Mr. McCormick for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK
FORMER CHIEF COUNSEL, U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE
ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Mr. MCCORMICK. Thank you.

Chairman Burlison, Ranking Member Frost, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you to contribute to your contribution of how bans on the use of natural gas increase costs.

A few states and about 100 units of local government have adopted such bans. Sponsors of these measures often attempt to deflect the coercive nature of their actions with euphemisms such as electrification or zero-emission building initiatives. Local and state bans are raising economic and non-economic costs on Americans, as shown in my prepared testimony and in Mr. Fazio's remarks. At the same time, these measures are denying people the opportunity to install appliances and equipment of their own choice. And the

fact is, such bans have near zero effect on global carbon dioxide and methane emissions, even though having such an effect is a major stated reason for their enactment.

To be clear, when market-driven electrifying end uses previously fueled by combustion can deliver greater convenience and efficiency, among other benefits, it should and will occur. Electrification is happening naturally. Take home heating, for example. A study conducted by a University of California professor shows that the percentage of U.S. homes heated with electricity has increased steadily since 1950, one percent in 1950, eight percent in 1970, 26 percent in 1990, and more than 40 percent—the professor found 40, but the current data is higher than that, 40 percent in 2020. However, free customer choice should be the driving force here, not government mandates aimed to serve a false narrative of energy transition.

As the Chairman mentioned, I am Pat McCormick, a member of the bar who stepped down last year as chief counsel of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in the Senate. I am expressing my personal views and appearing in my personal capacity, although I serve as a senior fellow with the National Center for Energy Analytics, or NCEA. NCEA is a national energy thinktank focused on data-driven analysis and the supply of energy essential for human flourishing.

Separately, I also provide advice on energy policy matters. I am not currently engaged in the practice of law, and no commercial interest suggested to me that I should testify.

Natural gas bans, zero-emission building mandates burden people with low incomes, especially those who live where the weather is cold. They restrict customer choice, they distort competition, and as has been mentioned, they transfer additional demand to electric systems that are already facing rapid load growth and reliability challenges. And in most cases—or pardon me, in many cases, they result in more natural gas being burned at electric generating plants than is reduced through end-use electrification, depending on the characteristics of the relevant grid.

Concerning customer choice, a ban on natural gas excludes gas furnaces, boilers, water heaters, ranges, and related products. The home heating market illustrates the scale of the choice being displaced. In 2024, natural gas remained the principal space heating fuel for 47 percent of U.S. households. Any—and as shown in my prepared testimonies, in 2025, manufacturers ship more heat pumps than gas furnaces. But consider that, according to these data, manufacturers shipped 3.2 million—3.2 million—new gas furnaces last year alone.

Coercive electrification measures rest on an asserted energy transition. Energy systems are always changing, but they evolve slowly and are additive. In 2024, more than 75 percent of global energy came from hydrocarbon sources. That percentage has changed comparatively little over the last 30 years, despite massive intervention. Voluntary or natural electrification is happening, but applying the force of law to compel quicker or deeper market penetration is wrong and has many negative consequences.

Congress should protect the operation of Federal energy law, especially now when Federal circuit courts are split on whether Fed-

eral energy law preempts local law. It should apply common sense and preserve the ability of households and businesses to choose the energy sources and equipment that best meet their needs.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

Now, I recognize Dr. Wyckoff for his opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF DR. PETE WYCKOFF (MINORITY WITNESS)
VICE PRESIDENT OF POLICY, EVERGREEN ACTION**

Dr. WYCKOFF. Good morning, Chairman Burlison, Ranking Member Frost, and Subcommittee Members. Thank you for this opportunity. My name is Pete Wyckoff, and I serve as vice president of policy at Evergreen Action. Until recently, I was Minnesota's deputy commissioner of Commerce for Energy. At Evergreen, we focus on making sure American families can afford to heat their homes and keep the lights on while cutting the pollution that harms our health and intensifies expensive climate-driven weather disasters.

As President Trump entered his second term, he promised to cut energy prices in half within a year. Instead, since January 2025, average household electric bills are up 15 percent nationwide and climbing, and gas for homes is up even more. And utilities have filed more than \$100 billion in rate increase requests since he took office.

Let me explain what and who is actually driving these increases. Hint, there are not a few localities with strong efficiency standards. From his first day back in office, President Trump has systematically obstructed the path forward for the fastest-to-build, cheapest new electric generation we have. His tax bill killed clean energy tax credits for wind and solar. That decision alone will cost customers in my home State of Minnesota and other states billions upon billions of dollars.

Just two weeks ago, President Trump canceled three federally designated transmission corridors, slowing the buildout of desperately needed infrastructure that would lower costs and increase reliability, particularly as data centers ask for more and more electricity.

His Administration has also spent nearly \$4 billion in our taxpayer money to cancel offshore wind projects, and it has assembled bureaucratic blockades to the permitting of other projects. This is stopping affordable power that families were counting on to keep their bills in check from coming online. The math is not complicated. When you deliberately choke off cheap new power while demand skyrockets, Americans will pay more. I guarantee it.

Every one of these decisions follows the same pattern. Ask yourself, who benefits? First, President Trump's tax bill eliminated credits designed to help working families switch from inefficient appliances to highly efficient electric ones, cutting their bills and reducing their dependence on volatile, expensive fossil fuels. Who benefits? Not the millions of working families denied relief, but his fossil fuel allies who are cashing in.

Second, the Administration reversed appliance energy efficiency standards that would have saved Americans roughly \$43 billion. Who benefits? Not your constituents who are now locked into even more expensive-to-own appliances.

Third, President Trump is forcing aging coal plants to stay online far past their retirement dates at a cost to American ratepayers of \$528 million thus far and counting. Who benefits? Same deal. Not American—the American people.

And finally, President Trump's war in Iran sent gas prices soaring, costing American drivers thus far a whopping \$725 in extra expenses per household for gasoline and diesel costs.

These are the type of things raising energy costs. Now let me turn to what this hearing asserts is behind rising bills. The building code policies under discussion today apply primarily to new construction, not to current homes or appliances. And in new construction, the data is clear. Building all electric from the start is cheaper. If you just add electricity to a house, and every house is going to have electricity, it is cheaper than adding electric and gas hookups. Both front—up front and over time, all electric homes cost \$7,500 to \$8,200 less to build. And additionally, new homes built to updated energy codes save owners up to \$15,000 over the life of the home. Stronger building codes have been shown to not slow down home building, but they do ensure that homes are affordable and safe.

I will acknowledge a real concern. For existing homeowners who want to upgrade, upfront costs can be a different—a genuine barrier to electrification. That is exactly why the Inflation Reduction Act created rebate programs to help families make the choice on their own timeline if they choose. But the Administration has slow-walked those programs, delaying and denying relief to families who need it.

In closure, picture a future where families live in efficient, affordable homes insulated from volatile global markets. The technology exists. The economics are clear. What stands in the way are not efficiency standards in a few blue cities. It is an Administration that is governed consistently and deliberately for its fossil fuel donors at the expense of working families, with considerable help from their allies in these halls.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. Conde, after hearing the remarks from Dr. Wyckoff, I just wanted to give you an opportunity to respond. The statement that requiring homes be only built with electricity, that adding all of the limitations of access to other fuel resources, that that actually keeps the cost down, what is your response to that?

Mr. CONDE. So, I think that is Orwellian. It does not make any sense. If it were so cheap and so good, why do you need to mandate it?

Mr. BURLISON. That is the obvious question, is it not?

Mr. CONDE. It is.

Mr. BURLISON. If we are so great, why would we—

Mr. CONDE. Nobody actually believes this.

Mr. BURLISON. That was my thought. I actually thought the statements were actually really absurd.

Mr. CONDE. And the idea that this is some form of relief for homeowners is insane. It makes no sense.

Mr. BURLISON. My other question is who actually is really benefiting from this like crony scheme of tax credits——

Mr. CONDE. Well——

Mr. BURLISON [continuing]. That was devised ideally to help people who are poor? That was the intent, right? That was the stated intent. Who are actually the ones that benefited from the tax credit schemes?

Mr. CONDE. It depends on exactly what tax credits we are talking about, but obviously, corporations selling heat pumps are big beneficiaries of the tax credits that were mentioned in the IRA, so it really depends, but——

Mr. BURLISON. Yes, it was either rich people who had the discretionary income to pay for expensive—like whether you wanted to put solar on your roof and get tax credits in that way, or if you wanted to put a geothermal unit, and you had the resources to do it, and then guess what? You get to charge your neighbor——

Mr. CONDE. That is right.

Mr. BURLISON [continuing]. Who cannot afford to do that. You get the tax deduction. They do not get that tax deduction.

Mr. CONDE. Most low-income Americans do not pay income taxes, so they do not——

Mr. BURLISON. That is right. In fact, I just looked it up. Only 9 percent of the population that makes below \$100,000 actually itemizes their deduction, so if you make less than \$100,000——

Mr. CONDE. Right.

Mr. BURLISON [continuing]. Odds are you are not itemizing, and you are really probably never going to install a geothermal unit, right? But the guy that makes over half a million to a million is 50 percent likely to itemize and is the person that is going to basically take taxpayer money to install a geothermal unit so that they can have cheaper electricity.

This is the absurdity that I think that my well-intentioned friends have made, but the irony is that the opposite has happened. It is almost like reverse Robin Hood. We basically created a system where we are robbing from the poor and giving to the rich. Would you agree with that statement?

Mr. CONDE. I would agree with that.

Mr. BURLISON. Mr. Fazio, could you explain, those of us who do not build homes for a living, who do not actually have to write the checks, actually figure out how to make something affordable? Can you explain what some of these well-intended, idealistic ideas, what their impact really is on the cost of homes?

Mr. FAZIO. Sure. We—NHB has done a study that says it is \$15,000 more to build a new home, all electric, which you said in your opening statement, but we are seeing gas bans pop up all over the country, New York, Maryland, D.C., Denver, Georgia even now, and—which will ultimately increase demand and increase electricity prices, which has a domino effect. All-electric homes are more expensive to build and operate and more expensive for the consumer to buy.

But I think more broadly and more importantly, we are forgetting the cost to get—now, we are talking about—we build subdivisions, we build communities. We do not build high-rise buildings in the middle of the city.

Mr. BURLISON. Right.

Mr. FAZIO. We build suburban, rural—

Mr. BURLISON. The American dream.

Mr. FAZIO [continuing]. The American dream for working families. So, the cost to get the power for an all-electric community from the power substation, through the lines, through the transformers, I mean, it can be hundreds of thousands of dollars, it can be millions of dollars to get the proper capacity to the site. That is extremely expensive.

Also, in the home itself, you are talking about many times having the electric panel go from 200 to 400 amps—not to get technical—for an electric home. And also, in addition to the cost of getting that upgraded power from the substation to the transformer to the site, maybe miles, the lead times, we have been quoted from utilities in New York, are 18 to 24 months. That—those are killers for these projects. These projects, they will not pencil out, they do not get built. They cause uncertainty to the investors and the banks and the lenders to these homebuilders. So, the uncertainty of this all is really troubling, and we simply do not have the capacity in New York and around the country.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you. My time has expired.

And with that, I yield to Ranking Member Frost for his questions.

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.

And it is good to hear you talk about reverse Robin Hood because that is kind of what you guys did last year with the Big Beautiful Bill. I mean, that is what the whole bill was. Most of the benefits went to the richest Americans. What I call reverse Robin Hood is ripping away healthcare from 17 million people, cutting Medicaid from 17 million people to give tax breaks to billionaires and corporations. What I call reverse Robin Hood is taking away \$200 billion from feeding hungry kids to give tax breaks to billionaires and corporations. So, I would love to talk about reverse Robin Hood, because that is the Big Beautiful Bill.

I am also very glad, though, that we are here to talk about increased costs in energy because I am paying the most in energy I ever have in my house. I live in Florida. It is the summer. It is really hot. There are families who just cannot afford to turn off their AC to save some money, and so they have to stomach the cost. This is going on around the entire country.

So, let us talk about increased costs. President Trump's tariffs, President Trump's trade wars, President Trump's war in Iran. Republicans control the White House and Congress, and they still cannot bring costs down. In fact, it is going the other way—up. It is going up.

In fact, President Trump, since he took office, household electricity bills have risen 16 percent nationally. When temperatures reach dangerous levels, like I said, families cannot just turn off their air conditioning to save money. Thousands of Americans die each year due to heat-related illnesses, and people in Florida need electricity to stay safe, and it is the same for many states across this country.

Dr. Wyckoff, what are consequences when families are forced to choose between paying their electric bill or paying for groceries, gas, and rent?

Dr. WYCKOFF. Of course, they are not good. Energy burden is a real thing. Energy burden is something that is going up in many places, and as you hinted, this is at a time when we have increasing electric demand, and we have increasing costs in our gas systems. I think thus far people have assumed that gas systems come for free, but electric systems cost. They both are two separate and costly systems. Both are going up.

In the case of the electric system, demand is going up, but at the same time, there are steps being taken to block the bringing on of the cheapest way to add electric generation, and that is wind and solar and storage to make it—

Mr. FROST. Yes, I have a question about this, too, because, you know, a lot of times you hear people talk about, we should not be picking winners and losers. We should not be picking winners and losers as it relates to this. So, has the United States of America never picked winners and losers or given billions of dollars in subsidies to any kind of energy production? Did that never happen?

Dr. WYCKOFF. I think you are setting me up there. We know that fossil fuels have been subsidized for years and years and years.

Mr. FROST. Oh.

Dr. WYCKOFF. They are literally built into the tax code, so no one talks about it.

Mr. FROST. So, fossil fuels—

Dr. WYCKOFF. Subsidies for—yes.

Mr. FROST [continuing]. Have been subsidized using taxpayer dollars for a long, long time.

Dr. WYCKOFF. Yes, it is permanently built into the tax code, so it is not these things that come and go and expire.

Mr. FROST. Oh, okay, got you. All right. I just wanted to make sure we got that on the record.

You know, part of the issue here is they are not making energy more affordable. They are too busy weaponizing it. Last October, the Trump Administration canceled over \$7 billion in grants for clean energy projects, which we spoke about.

And Mr. Fazio, to your comments, I agree. I mean, we need to diversify our energy mix, and this is part of doing that.

Dr. Wyckoff, should the politics of a state play a role in determining whether a project receives Federal funding or not?

Dr. WYCKOFF. Absolutely not. And as a former energy official from the State of Minnesota, I can say that we had grants that were penciled out for being cut, while identical grants in other states that had voted for Donald Trump continued. That is un-American.

Mr. FROST. Well, due to court documents, these projects were in 16 states that did not vote for President Trump—

Dr. WYCKOFF. Yes.

Mr. FROST [continuing]. And we know that politics was used in determining what projects would be cut and which ones would not.

On Monday, President Trump said that communities that oppose data centers want to be “backwards and poor.” He said, “let data reign.” So, that is right, America. If you are concerned about the

mass production of AI data centers in your backyard, President Trump says you want to be backward and you want to be poor. If you are worried about your energy costs going up because of an AI data center being put in your community, President Trump says, shut up, let data reign. This is the policy, I guess, of the Republican Party right now, and we know that data centers consume enormous amounts of electricity.

Look, we know that energy costs are going up right now. Families are being asked to pay more. People are losing their jobs. The biggest corporations just keep getting richer and richer. The next time we have a hearing on rising costs, let us talk about that. Let us continue to talk about the fact that costs are going up, not going down for the average American.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

I now recognize the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins, for his questions.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My, my, my, I am not sure where to begin here, but in my limited time of 5 minutes, I am going to drill down into homebuilding and home construction and the options that Americans have or do not have, depending upon where you live. And if you live in an area where government does not oppress your choices on how and what to build in your home or how to prepare your home for independent living, if you are interested, independence at all and government oppression, stopping your choices on installing natural gas appliances is quite a thing.

And to talk about the generations before, I mean, just to clarify what we are talking about here, natural gas is incredibly reliable, depending upon how old you are. Your grandparents or great-grandparents either had no electricity or very limited electricity. They had gas. They had a gas stove, a gas oven. They had a gas heater in the bathroom.

The first little house that my wife and I bought was a 1,000-square-foot, 65-year-old wood-frame home in south Louisiana, and it had, like, eight outlets in the whole house. The electricity was originally not installed in that home, and it gradually was added, like, as an interesting accessory. You had gas heaters, man, little gas heaters, a gas stove, a gas oven, the old-timers who were far healthier than this generation is. If you do not agree with that, then maybe watch some old videos. Those guys were way healthier than we are now. And on a bitterly cold day, they would commonly, grandma, grandpa, would heat their kitchen with a turned-on stove and an open, lit oven.

The access to having natural gas in your home—Mr. Fazio, I am going to ask you to answer these questions as quickly as you can, just to clarify for America because nobody has mentioned this. If you have a gas appliance, natural gas appliance like a stove or a barbecue pit, how easy is it to convert that to propane?

Mr. FAZIO. To convert it to propane?

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes.

Mr. FAZIO. It is very easy.

Mr. HIGGINS. Very easy, it is a valve. Let me just tell you. In case you do not know, it is a little valve you can change. So, if you

are a homeowner in America, you want to have reliable heat and the ability to cook without being dependent upon the government and a grid that can go down instantly and leave you at the mercy of whatever the government is going to perform to restore the grid, if you want to be able to actually warm the home for the family and cook food for the family, natural gas is it. So, if you are building a home or maintaining your home, it is almost a requirement.

A natural gas appliance is a propane appliance. It is a change of a valve, very simple. Do it yourself. You cannot convert an electric appliance to propane, can you, Dr. Wyckoff? It is a simple no.

Dr. WYCKOFF. Nope.

Mr. HIGGINS. No. If you say, well, you can have a diesel generator or gas generator, the kind of events that cause the grid to go down in the first place make it very difficult to buy gas and diesel, whereas the reliability of natural gas lines run through the ground to your house, incredibly dependable.

So, we have homebuilders, Mr. Fazio, right now that have to regionally deal with restrictions on installation of natural gas. Is that correct?

Mr. FAZIO. That is correct. And it is—as we speak, it is happening in real time.

Mr. HIGGINS. And the homebuilders themselves working for the homeowners, that homeowner, talk about \$15,000. Well, you are talking about the price on a house, man. That is a blip in the price of a house. What that homeowner is really looking for is a dependable, reliable, safe, and secure home for their family. Am I correct, Mr. Fazio?

Mr. FAZIO. Well, the homeowner, the buyer is looking for choice. They want the choice of energy. They want a choice how they cook their food and heat their house. They want to be able to make that choice. And we say, let the market determine that, not a mandate.

Mr. HIGGINS. I would concur. The market should control this, not the government. Homeowners should make these choices, not politicians.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

Mr. BURLISON. I now recognize Representative Ansari from Arizona.

Ms. ANSARI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let us begin with a couple of very straightforward questions. Yes or no, Mr. Fazio, is affordability a hoax?

Mr. FAZIO. Is affordability a hoax?

Ms. ANSARI. Correct. Yes or no?

Mr. FAZIO. I do not believe so, no.

Ms. ANSARI. Mr. Conde, yes or no, is affordability a con job?

Mr. CONDE. I do not really understand the question.

Ms. ANSARI. It is just a yes or no. Is it a con job?

Mr. CONDE. I do not know what you mean by affordability.

Ms. ANSARI. Oh, okay. Interesting.

Mr. McCormick, yes or no, is affordability a Democrat scam?

Mr. MCCORMICK. What is your definition of affordability, if I may ask? I do not—

Ms. ANSARI. The definition of affordability?

Mr. MCCORMICK. Your definition.

Ms. ANSARI. Do you think the concept of something being affordable, affordability, is a Democratic scam? It is a very simple yes or no.

Mr. MCCORMICK. Affordability, as I see it, is not a concept. It is a fact that particular consumers in their own situation have to evaluate.

Ms. ANSARI. And is it a Democratic scam?

Mr. MCCORMICK. Is affordability a Democratic scam?

Ms. ANSARI. I know these sound like ridiculous questions. They are. But this is what Donald Trump, the President of the United States, has been going around the country telling struggling Americans, all of these words that seem absurd to you all, which I agree. These are the words of the President. And this is a President who said that he would lower costs on day one. He said our grocery prices would fall. He said that the pain at the pump would go away. What happened to all of those promises?

Well, here is what Donald Trump actually has done with his time in office. He has cut over 110,000 good-paying clean energy jobs, including thousands in my home state of Arizona. The projects that Trump has cut were a lifeline.

They would have brought down energy costs and made life more affordable for Americans. I also agree with an all-of-the-above energy approach. But that is not what this Administration, with control of the White House and Congress, have done. These cuts are not just horrific for the planet. They are horrific for society and for our wallets. It is sheer stupidity and shortsightedness.

Meanwhile, if we are going to talk about energy affordability, let us look at where Donald Trump has focused his time. He has launched an illegal, reckless war with Iran that has caused energy prices to skyrocket with literally no plan, no objective, and no plan to get us disentangled.

He has also engaged in unprecedented levels of corruption. Let us not forget about him looking oil and gas CEOs in the eye and saying, if you contribute to my campaign, which they did to the tune of \$1 billion, I will give you unprecedented giveaways. And then we rolled back on the Inflation Reduction Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, cut these clean energy jobs, and literally took ourselves so far backward in comparison with our geopolitical rivals, China as one example. It is a catastrophic mess brought on by sheer incompetence of this Administration and the President himself.

Dr. Wyckoff, my Republican colleagues claim to care about lowering energy costs and making life more affordable for Americans. Do you think that cutting billions of dollars' worth of clean energy projects does that?

Dr. WYCKOFF. No, I do not.

Ms. ANSARI. And Dr. Wyckoff, also for you, Trump and Republicans' Big Ugly Bill eliminated critical tax incentives for clean energy projects from the Inflation Reduction Act. Can you explain what that is doing to the landscape of clean energy projects and a clean energy future in the United States?

Dr. WYCKOFF. So, as I said in my opening remarks, just in Minnesota alone, the loss of wind and solar tax credits will cost rate payers billions upon billions of dollars in the coming year. But even

without the tax credits, wind and solar, with the help of batteries, are the cheapest way to put new generation out there. So, just removing the tax credits was not enough to get rid of wind and solar as the predominant way people would move forward on building their generation. Economics says keep doing it anyway.

So, then we keep getting these thumbs on the scale of, well, I will pay you to give you the leases back for your wind projects. I will use American taxpayer dollars to do that. Or I will hold up Federal permits for wind projects in Minnesota and elsewhere because just getting rid of the tax credits was not enough to change the economics. Now, you have to push on the scale if you want to get rid of wind and solar development.

But what are you going to get in its place? You are not going to get anything. There is a backlog of years to build turbines, natural gas turbines, that were not already scheduled, you have already bought it, it is coming. You are not going to build new gas turbines. You cannot. There is no supply. The thing we can build right now is wind and solar.

So, if you are saying, I do not want to do that, you are saying, I do not want to build new generation.

Ms. ANSARI. Thank you. I will just end with this. The Trump Administration is doing incalculable damage to our economy and long-term prospects for a sustainable energy future. Whether we are talking about the cancellation or delay of 223 clean manufacturing, energy, and industrial projects representing more than \$82 billion in capital investment and the loss of projects that cost up to 112,000 manufacturing and construction jobs across the country. It is hypocrisy at its finest. It is appalling.

Thank you.

Mr. BURLISON. The lady yields back.

With unanimous consent, I want to enter into the record the following statements in support of this hearing from the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) and from the American Gas Association. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BURLISON. With that, I want to recognize Representative Palmer for his line of questions.

Mr. PALMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Conde, does it make sense when the United States has 583.9 trillion cubic feet of approved reserves of natural gas to be dependent on a foreign nation, an adversarial nation for our energy supply?

Mr. CONDE. No.

Mr. PALMER. Does the United States, in terms of its ability to produce power from solar or wind, are we capable of securing 100 percent of the supply chain necessary for building these facilities?

Mr. CONDE. Not under current permitting laws.

Mr. PALMER. Who are we dependent on for things like solar panels and electrical, steel, and things like that that you have to have for the—

Mr. CONDE. People's Republic of China.

Mr. PALMER. Does that concern you?

Mr. CONDE. Absolutely, it does, yes.

Mr. PALMER. It absolutely does. And I am not against renewables. I just think when you are closing hydrocarbon facilities at

the scale we have been closing them, literally losing hundreds of gigawatts of power and trying to replace it with intermittent renewables, we have done tremendous harm to our ability to provide the power that we are going to need when we need to increase the baseload power. Is that correct?

Mr. CONDE. That is correct.

Mr. PALMER. I thought so. Looking back over the last ten years of prices of residential natural gas versus electricity, which has been more stable and generally lower for American households?

Mr. CONDE. Natural gas.

Mr. PALMER. Yes. Frankly, again, I am not opposed to any particular source of power. I just think looking at our economic security and our national security, it is insane to think that we can provide that for our country without any hydrocarbon part of the grid. I am a huge proponent of small modular nuclear. I think that is where we need to go in terms of our future. And for those who are concerned about emissions, once you get them constructed and installed, that is zero emissions.

I am also looking at what Europe needs. Back in 2013, I was on a panel out in Oklahoma City, and I pointed out that Russia was using its energy resources to rebuild their military, basically modernization and that sort of thing, and that Europe had put themselves in a very disadvantageous position. I think we could find ourselves in that same position in regard to China. We already are in terms of critical minerals process and refining critical minerals from rare-earth elements. Does that concern the members of the panel—I will let each one of you answer—that we could be heading in the same direction that Europe did in terms of reliance on China?

Mr. MCCORMICK. That is a major concern, Congressman, and it was good of you to raise it. We have heard a lot in this hearing about the alleged benefits of certain sources of generation. But when you move to those sources, nothing is free. And those materials that go into the solar panel or the wind source, these sources of generation are fine, there is nothing wrong with them, but we have to be honest about what is happening there. And when you move to those sources, you are going to increase, and we are—we have increased our dependence upon minerals and mineral processing. And as you pointed out, that is—China is really leading the world in that in—by using means, by the way, that would be illegal in the United States.

Mr. PALMER. Absolutely. They have little regard for the environment, little regard for the safety and well-being of the people who work in these industries.

Right now, over 90 percent of all of the mining process and refining of critical minerals and rare-earth elements is controlled by China. And when you look at the recyclable materials for black mass, for electric vehicle (EV) waste and things like that, again, China controls over 90 percent of it. We put ourselves in a very difficult position.

I have been working on this issue for over six years. It started during COVID when China cut us off from PPE, personal protective equipment. And I started looking at the other things that we were reliant on and realized that this is a national security crisis.

And the Biden Administration did absolutely nothing about it. It was not until President Trump came into office that we began to take this seriously. And I think we are on a path to put ourselves where we are not dependent on China, and not only is the United States not dependent on China, but our allies will not be dependent on China.

Thank you for indulging a little extra there, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following statements in support of this hearing: Written comments from the Washington Gas and Light Company and also from the Taxpayer Protection Alliance. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BURLISON. And with that, I recognize Representative Min.

Mr. MIN. Thank you for holding this hearing.

I want to follow up on the comments just made by my Republican colleague, Mr. Palmer, who mentioned the national security threat that China poses, in particular, with respect to their energy expansion.

Dr. Wyckoff, I am sure you know this, but China put up more than 500 gigawatts of new energy last year. How much of that do you know was renewable?

Dr. WYCKOFF. China has gone heavily investing into the renewables.

Mr. MIN. Would it surprise you to know that 430 gigawatts, over 80 percent of their new energy, was renewable?

Dr. WYCKOFF. That sounds about right.

Mr. MIN. Now, some of my Republican colleagues talk about intermittent energy, with renewables being intermittent and not providing energy constantly. Can you explain to them what a battery is?

Dr. WYCKOFF. So,—yes. Solar panels only collect energy when the sun shines. You can store that energy in a chemical form, in hydrogen. You can store that energy in another chemical form, in a battery. You can store that energy in a gravity form, by pumping water up a hill.

Mr. MIN. I just installed a battery myself at my home with my solar panels earlier this year, or last year, but because the Republicans cutoff the tax credits, I was able to get in just before those tax credits expired, and those allow me to provide constant energy in my home.

Now, where is battery technology today, and where do you expect it to be in, say, ten years? Is this going to be enough to maybe, like, you know, deal with the intermittency that my Republican colleagues are so concerned about?

Dr. WYCKOFF. So, you can look to California or Texas, depending on which is your cup of tea, and you will see the future of battery storage. These two—

Mr. MIN. It is getting cheaper and cheaper, right?

Dr. WYCKOFF. It is getting cheaper and cheaper. They are installing massive quantities, and they have basically taken solar and made it a—

Mr. MIN. And here in the United States, we put up, I just want to point out, just over 50 gigawatts of new energy last year. That

is about 1/10 of what China put up. And it was all oil and gas because the Interior Department is refusing to approve new permits, as you mentioned in your testimony. In fact, the Trump Administration's war on clean energy is so total that, in addition to refusing permits, as you noted, they have done crazy other stuff. They literally paid a French company, TotalEnergies, \$1 billion to take wind energy off the grid. That is insane. Do we think the Chinese are stupid? Are they, like, falsely investing in this new technology?

Dr. WYCKOFF. No, they are not stupid.

Mr. MIN. Yes.

Dr. WYCKOFF. And we can develop the same supply chains, and we are working on it and are working on it in our country to be able to produce these here.

Mr. MIN. And I am sure you are all aware of this, but the Chinese are going around the world right now selling out-of-the-box solutions, renewable energy plus batteries, to countries in Africa, Asia, South America. And these countries, if you talk to their leaders, they do not necessarily want to take Chinese technology. They are concerned about China's influence. They are so much cheaper than the oil and gas infrastructure that we are providing, that we are offering, that they take these. And that is a national security threat to the United States of America. So, if my Republican colleagues are so concerned about national security, they should be doubling down on this because China right now is eating our lunch around the world. They are developing a lot of influence because of their emphasis on renewables.

Now, I wanted to ask another couple questions. You mentioned the massive subsidies for oil and gas, which includes not only tax credits, but much of our military expenditures. But I want to talk about the oil and gas infrastructure. How does gas get delivered to our homes, Dr. Wyckoff?

Dr. WYCKOFF. It gets delivered through pipes.

Mr. MIN. And are those pipes free to install?

Dr. WYCKOFF. No. In fact, it used to be that when you bought gas as a homeowner in Minnesota to heat, which is how most of us heat, about 1/3 of the cost was the pipes. Now it is more than—

Mr. MIN. And do those pipes last forever?

Dr. WYCKOFF. Now, it is more than 2/3 of the cost. It is—

Mr. MIN. Oh, wow. Yes. And do those pipes last forever?

Dr. WYCKOFF. Nope.

Mr. MIN. They have to be repaired and replaced periodically, right?

Dr. WYCKOFF. Yes.

Mr. MIN. In fact, I am going to just note that I know something about this because I passed legislation in the State of California, S.B. 1221, which dealt with this issue. And I talked with a number of utility companies in the State of California that noted that in many areas, replacing the natural gas infrastructure was so much more expensive than moving to all-electric that they could literally replace all of the gas-burning appliances, home heating, ranges, stoves, et cetera, with all-electric. They could replace that for free. The consumer would actually have a lower cost, so free appliances, lower cost of utilities, that sounds like a great deal, right?

Dr. WYCKOFF. Sounds good to me.

Mr. MIN. But the reason that they could not do this was because they have a duty to serve. And do you know what the duty to serve is? Could you explain that briefly?

Dr. WYCKOFF. So, the idea is that if you have a gas facility or you are a gas company in your area, it needs to be serving every customer. If you have an electric company in your area, it needs to be willing to serve every customer.

Mr. MIN. And so, that means that they are required right now under existing law in all 50 states to replace that oil and gas infrastructure, even if it is more expensive, even if it does not make economic sense. And so, this is crazy. And I would just note that, right now, what these witnesses on the Republican side are proposing is reinvesting in aging technology that is becoming more and more expensive day by day. As we move forward, it is clear that renewable energy is the future. It is going to be cheaper. In many places, it already is cheaper. And doubling down on aging oil and gas infrastructure is like doubling down on the horse and buggy or wood-burning stoves. And I am sure that if this hearing were taking place in 1926 instead of 2026, these witnesses would probably be testifying in favor of wood-burning stoves right now.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Chair, I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record a report from Climate Power, which shows the rise in household electricity bills and loss for jobs for Americans.

Mr. BURLISON. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. FROST. I also ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record a report from the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which found that Trump's Administration's energy agenda is increasing profits for fossil fuel companies.

Mr. BURLISON. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. FROST. And then a new article from ABC entitled "New York Construction Industry Could Be Hit Hardest As Canadian-U.S. Trade War Continues."

Mr. BURLISON. Without objection, so ordered.

Mr. BURLISON. And I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the following statements supporting this hearing: One written testimony from Angela Dingle, who is the president and CEO of Women Impacting Public Policy; and then another statement from Energy Equipment Infrastructure Alliance. And without objection, they are submitted, so ordered.

Mr. BURLISON. And with that, I recognize the gentlewoman from Colorado, Ms. Boebert, for 5 minutes.

Ms. BOEBERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Mr. Fazio, Colorado is already seeing cities like Crested Butte, Boulder, Denver, they are using building codes that prohibit natural gas in certain newly constructed buildings. And from the perspective of a homebuilder, what does removing natural gas as an option due to the cost of the construction of a new home?

Mr. FAZIO. Well, you are eliminating choice for the consumer, so you are eliminating them to pick how they choose to heat their home, heat their water, or cook their meals. And the cost is more expensive. And I mentioned earlier, we have a study from NHB

that states that it is \$15,000 more to build an all-electric home today.

And, you know, I did not realize that there were that many in Colorado. I thought it was just Denver, but thanks for mentioning that.

But we believe an all-the-above energy approach will serve more Americans than any other strategy, to have that choice and not be mandated to tell the consumer, to tell the homebuilder what they have to put in the house for the buyer.

Ms. BOEBERT. Yes. I am really excited to hear you talk about choice being taken away because so often on the other side of the aisle, I hear how pro-choice my colleagues over there are, and here, they are wanting government to choose and be that heavy lifter and have the heavy hand of government choose the winners and losers.

Now, Mr. Fazio, in Colorado, voters will have an opportunity this November to vote on Initiative 177. I am not sure if you have heard of it or not yet. But this would enshrine a right to purchase natural gas in the state constitution. Now, from your experience representing builders, why would this ability to preserve, to choose natural gas be important to Colorado homeowners and potentially even others as—

Mr. FAZIO. Well, I was not aware of that. Thank you again. Again, it preserves choice. I mean, we have our hands full in New York. We have an energy capacity issue. And to have an all-hands-on-deck, all the toolbox, all-of-the-above the approach serves our Nation well, serves homebuyers well, serves builders well and I believe, we believe, will drive the cost of housing. And as you all know, we have an enormous need for housing in this country. And every additional mandate or cost has to be considered in that context.

Ms. BOEBERT. Yes, so, I speak with a lot of our co-ops throughout Colorado and, you know, transmission lines are always an issue, how expensive that is, companies coming in using eminent domain and taking over private property rights. And I think that there are better ways to do things.

Now, what concerns about forcing additional heating demands onto the electric grid during an extreme winter or an event with electricity demands is already—when those demands are already elevated?

Mr. FAZIO. Well, in my oral testimony earlier, I spoke about a blizzard in Buffalo in December 2022. And I could tell you from some of our members' experience that one of our members' dad was holed up in his house. They could not get to him. He is 90 years old. And he was able to keep himself warm because he put his gas stove on. So, from that perspective—and also, we have a builder in the Ithaca area who builds tiny homes, and he heats these tiny homes with these small open-face kind of stoves, gas stoves that—gas-generated. And during a power outage, you are able to heat that whole home with that one little—he calls them open stoves.

Ms. BOEBERT. Yes, thank you very much.

Mr. McCormick, kind of along the same lines, if buildings that are currently relying on natural gas for heating and other energy

needs are converted to electricity, how does that change the demands placed on our electric grid?

Mr. McCORMICK. Well, it will dramatically increase the demand on the electric grid at the time—just at the time when load is also growing, and so you are going to stress these grids. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, or NERC, has pointed out that the systems are already stressed and has expressed concern about the ability of the systems to maintain reliability.

Ms. BOEBERT. Yes, and I will ask this very quickly, Mr. Conde. We are seeing cities across the country use building codes with zero emission requirements to restrict or effectively prohibit natural gas. How does Federal law particularly prohibit—or excuse me, this policy apply when local government is using these same building codes?

Mr. CONDE. Sure, so as the Ninth Circuit has said, these laws are illegal. The statute prohibits state and local laws concerning energy use, and it is pretty difficult to say that banning energy use from gas appliances is not concerning energy use. So, I think it is a pretty straightforward argument, and I think we will hear soon from the Supreme Court on this.

Ms. BOEBERT. Wonderful. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

And with that, I recognize—first, I want to say thank you to the witnesses all for coming today. I think this was a very informative hearing. And with that, I now yield to Ranking Member Frost for his closing remarks.

Mr. FROST. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you so much to our witnesses for being here and sharing your perspectives.

I think we can all agree that energy costs are too damn high, and we need to do something to make this necessity more affordable for Americans. But I have to say, targeting pretty small-scale local bans is not going to be the solution. And so, my hope is, as we continue to have hearings on rising costs, let us focus on a lot of the bigger things that are driving energy costs up because, hopefully, we all know in this room that this is not it. There are a lot of issues impacting this and we should definitely get into it.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

And in closing, I want to thank the witnesses again for your time.

This is an important issue. Families are struggling with energy bills, which have been climbing steadily since 2020. Various elected officials in the progressive movement have waged a war on fossil fuels and natural gas and its use from the Federal level all the way down to the state level. And while the most aggressive attempt was under the Biden Administration, which sought to phaseout gas stoves and electrify the country at taxpayers' expense.

After the Biden Administration and Congressional Democrats failed to zero out natural gas and force electrification at the Federal level, the fight continues, increasingly shifting to the state and the local level. Democrats across the country are working to ban natural gas and other gases through building codes and net zero

mandates. And I personally have fought against these attacks on energy affordability and the grid reliability since my days in the Missouri Senate when I passed legislation to do so.

Look, these mandates hurt families, especially hardworking families and small businesses. And I personally oppose any kind of special tax incentive, even for the fossil fuel industry, for any industry whatsoever. At the end of the day, I think we should be examining any of the tax codes that unfairly pick a winner or loser and be objective about it and make sure that those taxes are actually going to the people to benefit the people and not some corporation.

But these bans have a broader impact than just the jurisdiction that bans natural gas. The financial pain experienced by working families paying for environmentalist-driven electrification is also felt in neighboring states because we are all on the same power pools, right? My community is sharing the same electricity power pool as neighboring states, Oklahoma, Kansas, et cetera.

And so, many families such as mine rely on multiple resources, including propane and other fuels, to heat their homes. In fact, we chose when we built our home to use propane because once you have cooked with gas, you will never want to go back. It is just a personal choice, which is why I cannot stand these natural gas bans and elimination of these choices and the choice of people on how they want to choose to heat their homes.

Natural gas bans also mean that summer and winter will now have electricity demand surges. For example, if Washington, D.C.'s natural gas ban had been in place during the harsh winter cold earlier this year, poor residents already struggling to get by would have been hit with massive electricity bills. This Subcommittee has already covered the high cost of housing, and we just heard today from Mr. Fazio that natural gas appliances make new homes a long-term energy cost more affordable. Republicans are offering a different solution for working Americans, which is energy freedom. Americans ultimately should have the choice.

I am going to suspend. Hold on.

Thank you, Mr. Perry. I now recognize Mr. Perry from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to our witnesses for being here.

Question from me is centered on Pennsylvania. My bosses live there. They pay the rates there. But of course, Pennsylvania sits on a mountain of energy. And I would just like any on the panel to comment on policies like REGI, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and how it impacts consumer prices for heating and for energy in general, and also on policies like the Delaware River Bay Commission, which has banned fracking in the area of its jurisdiction across Pennsylvania. And then further to comment on states like New York, who have disallowed any of the pipelines that would take the natural gas from Pennsylvania to spots in New England that force us literally to buy Russian gas transported on Russian ships in New England at probably twice the price of gas in Pennsylvania and other states, if anybody would comment on those policies.

Yes, sir, Mr. McCormick.

Mr. McCORMICK. Yes. Well, first of all, with respect to the Greenhouse Gas Initiative of several states, Virginia has come in—has come back into that activity since the election of its new Governor, and electric costs are projected to rise dramatically as a consequence. There is a lot of data on that point.

With respect to the problem of there being too little natural gas infrastructure, that natural gas in Pennsylvania, if it were available to serve in New England, would reduce electric costs in New England pretty dramatically and increase—and frankly, increase energy security there. It would also address the situation that in New England—New England is really in a very difficult energy situation.

Mr. PERRY. But Mr. McCormick, if you could, please, if you could speak more plainly. So, I think I understand what you are saying, but for people that are not living in this world and your world every single day that, you know, they get up, they put their kids on the bus, and they go to work and they pay their bills. What I hear you saying, what I want you to clarify is that there is not a shortage of natural gas.

Mr. McCORMICK. No, no. In Pennsylvania—

Mr. PERRY. There is not a shortage of energy-producing traditional supplies that can be—and generation can be done cleanly. These are policy decisions that the results of which drive the cost of consumer energy higher. These are policy decisions.

Mr. McCORMICK. Yes, they are policy decisions.

Mr. PERRY. And if anybody wants to comment on that or this further, Pennsylvania's current Governor, Governor Shapiro, who plans to run for President, is blaming the PJM, the Pennsylvania-Jersey-Maryland Interconnection, the power regulator across Pennsylvania and other states, for the high cost of energy while simultaneously closing down baseload generation like the Governor before him. Would you comment on that?

Mr. McCORMICK. Yes, the—your analysis is correct. The problem—the fundamental problem in the PJM area, PJM being the regional transmission organization for this 13-state region. The fundamental problem is that there is not enough electric capacity being built—

Mr. PERRY. But why?

Mr. McCORMICK [continuing]. Or being maintained.

Mr. PERRY. Why?

Mr. McCORMICK. Well, because of the many of the policy decisions that you have already identified. For example, I mean, the problem, frankly, of permitting and the war that many special interest groups have prosecuted against the construction and the installation of natural gas pipelines, for example.

Mr. PERRY. If you do not mind, I do not mean to cut you off—Mr. Conde, did you have a comment?

Mr. CONDE. Yes, so, my law firm was involved in some of the litigation involving proposed pipelines to New England. So, the reason, you know, prices are so cheap in Pennsylvania and it is so expensive in New England is—

Mr. PERRY. They are not cheap in Pennsylvania. They are just much more expensive in New England, but carry on, please.

Mr. CONDE. So, much less expensive. So, the reason is that New York State attorney general, environmental activist, opposed and litigated the pipelines to death so you cannot build through New York, so there is a chokepoint right there. And instead, we are importing from Russia.

Mr. PERRY. So, if I could summarize at least my portion of the conversation with you gentlemen is that it is not a lack of supply. It is a wrongheaded policy, poor judgment that has caused the prices of generation and fuel in general and certainly in north-eastern states to be high. These are policy decisions made by elected officials. Yes or no?

Mr. MCCORMICK. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Conde?

Mr. CONDE. Yes.

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Fazio?

Mr. FAZIO. I do not have an answer.

Mr. PERRY. I yield back.

Mr. BURLISON. I yield 1 minute to Ranking Member Frost.

Mr. FROST. Dr. Wyckoff, I saw your hand was on the thing. I do not know if you wanted to add something to that.

Dr. WYCKOFF. Oh, yes, thank you. It seems like an odd time to be paying offshore wind projects that were almost completed to go away when we have a supply limitation in the Eastern part of the United States.

Mr. FROST. Thank you for making that point.

Mr. BURLISON. Thank you.

And with that, I want to say again thank you to our witnesses for coming. I think this was a very valuable discussion.

And with that, and without objection, all Members have five legislative days within which to submit materials and additional written questions for the witnesses, which will be forwarded to these witnesses.

And if there is no further business, without objection, the Committee now stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

