

Rep. Phil Gingrey
Opening Statement for Full Committee Mark-Up
Energy & Commerce Committee
April 29, 2014

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for calling today's mark-up on three important pieces of legislation from the Energy and Power Subcommittee. These bills address needed energy production that will help shape our foreign policy as well as promote energy efficiency to save taxpayer dollars.

Given the ongoing unrest in Eastern Europe, I would like to focus my comments on H.R. 6 – the Domestic Prosperity and Global Freedom Act. This important legislation – authored by my colleague from Colorado, Cory Gardner – will update the Natural Gas Act by modernizing our export policy for liquefied natural gas (LNG). This important legislation will allow the other 158 members of the WTO to import our LNG without further delays by the Department of Energy. Furthermore, H.R. 6 will approve any existing application filed before March 6, 2014 without delay.

As we have seen over the past several months, Russian President Vladimir Putin is taking his country in the direction of 19th Century imperialism with the acquisition of Crimea and the current stand-off in Eastern Ukraine. To make matters worse, Putin continues to mock economic sanctions and the global community. Unfortunately, our allies in Europe are placed in a precarious spot because Russia provides nearly 50% of the natural gas for the continent.

Mr. Chairman, to get to the heart of Russia's sphere of economic influence in Europe, we must undercut its' ability to provide energy to the region. With advanced technologies in the energy production industry like hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling, it is now estimated that we have the ability to access natural gas for nearly a century. Yet, despite this abundant supply, we continue to be shackled by outdated policies that allow LNG export applications to languish at DOE for nearly three years, thereby preventing us from reaching our full potential as a global energy producer.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 6 will help move us in the right direction. In addition to undercutting Putin's ability to have Ukraine – and all of Europe – beholden to Russia's energy production, expediting LNG exports will help our domestic economy. ICF International estimates that exporting LNG will create at a minimum of 73,000 jobs over the next twenty years.

H.R. 6 will create jobs, grow our economy, and strategically diminish Vladimir Putin's economic power in Ukraine and across all of Europe. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.