

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup of H.R. 3301, H.R. 4572, and H.R. 4342
May 7, 2014

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today we continue our efforts to boost job creation and modernize government for the innovation era as we begin consideration of three important pieces of legislation.

First, we will consider bipartisan legislation I authored with my colleague Gene Green, the North American Energy Infrastructure Act, which is a critical component of our effort to construct the Architecture of Abundance. While this legislation does not directly impact the Keystone XL pipeline, the project's five years of delays underscores why this bill is so necessary as we seek to fulfill our energy potential. As it stands, cross-border pipeline or transmission line projects can be subjected to open-ended federal delays that far exceed that of comparably sized projects that stay within the U.S.

H.R. 3301 is a targeted solution. It takes the poorly defined process of reviewing cross-border projects that was cobbled together from Executive Orders and replaces it with a concrete pathway and clear Congressional authorities. It puts an end to the unjustified delays of much-needed pipelines. And for electric transmission lines, it strengthens current arrangements encouraging an integrated North American electric grid.

I want to emphasize that the bill does not change any of the underlying safety and environmental reviews. A cross-border pipeline or transmission line would be subject to all of the same requirements as a comparable project within the U.S., but it would no longer have to contend with additional hurdles simply because it crosses into Canada or Mexico.

Next, we will consider bipartisan legislation to reauthorize STELA, ensuring that more than 1.5 million satellite television subscribers do not lose their access to important broadcast programming. This is a priority for all members of this committee. We had a spirited dialogue that resulted in our bipartisan agreement.

The other targeted reforms in this bill make small changes that will have a positive impact on consumers and industry alike. Eliminating the costly CableCARD integration ban repeals unnecessary regulation and allows for greater innovation in cable set-top boxes. In addition, changes to retransmission consent negotiations help level the playing field and ultimately benefit consumers. This bill is good policy and I thank Chairman Walden and ranking members Waxman and Eshoo and the staff for their work on this agreement.

Lastly, we will consider the DOTCOM Act - a deliberate and commonsense attempt to bring transparency to the process of transitioning NTIA's oversight role to a successor. This is a good government bill, plain and simple. The DOTCOM Act is a question of domestic U.S. policy and ensures that NTIA pause to fully consider the implications and consequences of any proposal they are presented with.

It would be irresponsible for Congress and the administration to ignore those hostile governments that have openly expressed their desire to seize and control the Internet. Once we transfer this role away, there is no going back. Taking the extra time to allow a GAO evaluation of any successor proposal should not be a partisan issue – and instead should be viewed as a

step in this years-long transition. Protecting the core values of the Internet is a goal we all share, and this bill furthers that goal.

We have had a strong record of bipartisan success with over a dozen public laws on the books. Let's build upon that record: I urge my colleagues to support all of these commonsense bills and I look forward to moving them swiftly to House floor.

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