

**Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers Opening
Remarks
Full Committee Hearing
American Energy Expansion: Strengthening
Economic, Environmental, and National Security
January 31, 2023**

As prepared for delivery

Welcome to our first Energy and Commerce Committee hearing of the 118th Congress...

... especially to our new subcommittee chairs... Jeff Duncan, who's our new Chair of the Energy, Climate, and Grid Security Subcommittee...

...and Bill Johnson, who'll Chair the Environment, Manufacturing, & Critical Minerals Subcommittee.

Energy is foundational to every aspect of Americans' lives.

Whether it's making energy more affordable and reliable, securing our supply chains, beating China, protecting the environment, addressing climate change, or putting energy security back at the center of policymaking.

These should be bipartisan goals, and we've already proven they can be over the last few weeks.

One of our actions on the floor was passing H.R. 22, the Protecting America's Strategic Petroleum Reserve from China Act...

...which passed with 113 Democrats voting for it.

And last week, we passed H.R. 21, the Strategic Production Response Act, in another bipartisan vote...

...to help ensure a vital energy asset isn't drained for non-emergency, political purposes.

These are just the beginning of a robust agenda to restore American energy dominance.

We need to be doing more to secure and unleash American energy.

'Rush to green' policies have had a devastating effect in Europe...

...countries are rationing energy, switching back to coal fired plants, and people are dying due to lack of heat and electricity.

America doesn't have to follow Europe down this path.

Addressing emissions and unleashing abundant, affordable, and reliable energy aren't mutually exclusive.

In the last decade, we've led the world in emissions reductions while increasing the availability of affordable energy through innovation.

We did this while maintaining some of the highest environmental and labor standards in the world.

We must continue innovating, taking advantage of our abundant natural resources, and reducing emissions.

Natural gas is one of our greatest economic and strategic resources... we cannot afford to shut it down.

Instead, we must expand production and continue building pipelines...

... the safest, most reliable infrastructure to move it around the country...

...and increase our capacity to export LNG to the rest of the world to reduce carbon emissions and combat Russia and China's use of energy to expand their authoritarian influence.

We also have an opportunity to achieve a new renaissance in American nuclear technology and once again lead the world in its development and deployment...

... but to be successful we need to rethink our restrictive regulatory approach and combat the anti-science opposition to expanding nuclear energy.

We need to review the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's procedures and practices, to be sure it can efficiently license new and advanced reactors.

Thankfully we are close to finishing the Vogtle Plant in Georgia, but one new nuclear plant isn't enough.

Ensuring safe nuclear power is essential for securing American energy, and also for protecting the environment and addressing climate change...

...and we can do this without inefficient, burdensome regulations. Safety cannot be an excuse for doing nothing.

To reestablish American nuclear leadership globally, we need to approve and build new, advanced reactors...

... establish a permanent spent fuel repository, while exploring the potential for fuel recycling...

... and establish a reliable domestic fuel industry that supplies and enriches uranium and reduces our reliance on Russia.

Across the board, we need to update the regulatory landscape to pave the way for energy sources and technologies of all kinds...

Hydropower, nuclear, Natural gas and oil, hydrogen...

... along with wind, solar, and batteries.

Republicans support all of these technologies, but we do not support picking winners and losers through massive subsidies and rigging regulations to only favor certain industries.

Our energy solutions are climate solutions. We have a responsibility to our generation and future generations for cleaner water, air, and reduced emissions.

Every energy technology and source has a role to play...

...but we need to be able to ensure we are not becoming entirely dependent on unreliable, intermittent energy sources that rely on Chinese supply chains.

It's time to flip the switch and unleash American energy...

...and this committee is at the very center of securing our global leadership and making people's lives better.

I want to work with everyone, Republicans and Democrats, to achieve these goals.

These can't continue to be partisan issues, and my door is open to every Member of this Committee who wants to lead on unleashing American energy.

I'll now recognize our full committee Ranking Member, Mr. Pallone, for five minutes for his opening statement.