

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Ranking Member Frank Pallone**

***Hearing on “Unleashing American Energy, Lowering Energy Costs and Strengthening supply  
Chains”***

**February 7, 2023**

Committee Republicans are showing today that their top energy and environmental priorities are to do the bidding of Big Oil and to undermine our nation’s bedrock environmental laws. These are not the same priorities of Committee Democrats.

Over the last two years, Democrats delivered historic wins for the American people. We enacted laws that are already creating good paying jobs, cutting costs for working families, and advancing homegrown clean energy – all while tackling the worsening climate crisis.

While we want to build upon these successes for the American people, House Republicans are stuck in the past and failing to address the energy challenges and opportunities we face today.

I’d like to start by highlighting my serious concerns with some of the fossil-focused bills we’re discussing today. The Cross-border Energy Infrastructure bill is nothing more than a shadow approval of the Keystone XL pipeline masquerading as legislation. It establishes that every single cross-border energy project is in the public interest – a radically higher bar than exists now. This is not serious legislation.

Representative Burgess’ bill would put the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in charge of permitting reviews that it doesn’t have the expertise or the time to lead.

And the Unlocking our Domestic LNG Potential Act would eliminate the requirement that the Department of Energy determine that exporting natural gas from a U.S. facility is in the national interest. This legislation would effectively greenlight sending unrestricted amounts of LNG to adversaries like China. It’s just more proof that Committee Republicans are more interested in doing the bidding of their fossil fuel friends than actually protecting our energy security.

I am also deeply disappointed with the legislative proposals being considered in the Environment Subcommittee’s jurisdiction.

Two of the bills would revoke programs enacted as part of the Inflation Reduction Act that are projected to cut climate pollution, reduce the deficit, and leverage private sector investment in clean energy projects across the nation. H.R. 484 targets the Methane Emission Reduction Program, which established a suite of incentives to drive down excess methane

pollution and remediate the effects of the pollution that does occur. This program fundamentally ensures polluters pay for wasted methane, not customers.

Republicans also target the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program, which invests \$27 billion in nonprofit, state, and local climate finance institutions that support the rapid deployment of low- and zero-emission technologies. My Republican colleagues claim to support all of the above policies, yet they oppose a program that invests in clean energy projects.

We are also considering bills that allow so-called critical energy sources to bypass commonsense environmental protections. One bill would circumvent consideration of safer technologies to avoid chemical disasters under the Risk Management Program. While another bill would undercut protective health policies that were developed and passed on a bipartisan basis by this Committee in the Frank Lautenberg Act. We should not be putting polluters over people by waiving critical public health and environmental protections that keep American communities safe.

If Republicans really want to unleash American energy, I invite them to stop trying to tear down critical climate and environmental programs, and work with us to build a better future for all by investing in clean energy and bolstering our environmental safeguards.

I can't find much value in the legislation before us today. Which is unfortunate, since many members are interested in working on clean energy permitting. Instead, my majority colleagues scheduled a hearing on 17 Republican bills or discussion drafts without even asking Democrats if we have any bills that would address the underlying topic. If they truly want to enact legislation that addresses energy security and affordability, this is not the path. The American people deserve better.

Finally, I must set the record straight about why the Administration could not testify at today's hearing. The majority claims they gave the Administration two weeks' notice, and that the Administration said this was not enough time to secure witnesses. What they left out is that the two weeks' notice came in an email right before midnight on January 24. It did not contain the list of bills for the hearing, the legislative text of the bills, or any information about other invited witnesses.

How are the agencies supposed to prepare for a hearing when they have not been told what bills they are supposed to be commenting on? And to be clear, only two of the 17 bills had been introduced when this hearing was noticed one week ago. If the bills were not ready to share with the Administration, or with Democratic members, then this hearing should have been postponed until a later date.