Responses to Questions for the Record from April 9, 2025, hearing before the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

The Honorable David M. Turk, Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Center on Global Energy Policy, Columbia University.

<u>**The Honorable Doris Matsui**</u>

Q: AI is redefining our society, much as the internet did for the information age. And, while we should recognize the benefits of AI, we also need commonsense guardrails to protect against harms. AI-driven content may not be accurate, as models can hallucinate, presenting false and misleading information as fact. Biased algorithms can also deepen inequalities and hurt consumers. That's why I've championed legislation like the *Algorithmic Justice and Online Platform Transparency Act* to ban discriminatory algorithms and establish a safety and effectiveness standard. **Mr. Turk, how can we reduce bias and guarantee the reliability of AI outputs?**

A: AI is an incredibly powerful and transformative technology with widespread applications that can improve the lives of Americans across the country in fields from cancer research to advanced manufacturing. At the same time, I have found that the experts who are best versed in AI technology are also the ones who most forcefully advocate for effective guardrails against its excesses. There needs to be a bipartisan imperative to establish mandatory guardrails for AI and independent oversight to protect personal data and allow Americans to seek accountability. It is also crucial to implement safeguards to prevent AI models from spreading false information.

Q: Mr. Turk, in light of the increasing use of AI across various industries, how should government address concerns related to data privacy and security to protect consumers and businesses alike?

A: Government must lead the way on developing safeguards that prevent the abuse of AI, including to steal Americans' identities, feed them misinformation, and defraud their businesses. To that end, there needs to be urgent, bipartisan interest in legislation that would provide protections to Americans as well as interest in the promulgation of rules in the Executive Branch. The private sector is a crucial partner, of course, and it will be critical for government to work closely with the crop of innovative American companies that have placed the US in a dominant position with regard to this technology.

Q: America needs to lead in developing rules of the road for emerging technologies such as AI, so that they are trusted, secure, and reflect our democratic values. That's why I co-led the bipartisan, bicameral Promoting United States Leadership in Standards Act to strengthen U.S. leadership in international standards setting activities. This Congress, I will work to reintroduce and get this bill across the finish line. I'm deeply concerned that reckless cuts to our federal workforce and alienation of our allies will harm our ability to be the global technological leader. **Mr. Turk, why is it so critical to make sure our federal agencies have the experts and resources they need to advance U.S. AI innovation?**

A: The US government has enormous responsibility to help companies develop AI, to maintain the United States' dominant position with regard to developing the technology, and to support affordable and clean energy to power AI data centers. The US government cannot accomplish any of those tasks without a dedicated, motivated, and talented workforce. I very much share your concern that various actions by the Trump Administration have recklessly compromised this incredibly important capability.

Q: Mr. Turk, how can collaborations between the government and private sector be structured to accelerate the development and deployment of AI innovations while maintaining fair competition and safeguarding public interests?

A: It will be crucial to strike the right balance between giving American companies the space they need to innovate and preventing abuses of the technology that can harm all American consumers and businesses. The private sector's profit motive means that it will not necessarily always pursue technological progress that is in the interest of broader society. In addition to intensive public-private discussion and collaboration, the government should provide mandatory guardrails and ensure that red-teaming is required before new models can be accessed by the broader public.

The Honorable Nanette Barragan

Q: Deputy Secretary Turk, one of the challenges in our ability to expand data center infrastructure is the national shortage of power transformers, which are essential to deliver electricity to large facilities such as data centers. Utilities now face waiting times of 2 years or more for the delivery of transformers for energy projects. **Given this shortage, will President Trump's tariffs on steel make it even more expensive or difficult to supply the transformers we need to power our growing AI infrastructure?**

A: Yes. Power transformers are an absolutely critical part of our electricity infrastructure. The United States is facing huge increases in electricity demand, and the energy demands of AI will require the building of even more energy projects across the country. Tariffs will make the goods we need to build energy projects – including transformers – more expensive.

Q: Deputy Secretary Turk, President Trump recently signed an executive order that promotes coal as a fuel to power AI data centers—at the same time Republicans work to repeal clean energy investments. **Can you speak to what that would mean for Americans—especially when it comes to higher energy bills, more pollution, and the health impacts of keeping coal plants running just to meet rising demand from data centers?**

A: AI requires an enormous amount of electricity, and one of the crucial challenges we face as we work to maintain the US's dominant position with regard to this technology is finding sources of affordable energy to power it. Clean sources of power – particularly solar and storage – are now the quickest and most affordable ways to bring on new electricity supply over the near term. Maintaining – and even strengthening – tax incentives, loans, and grants like those in the

Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill are absolutely crucial to continuing to quickly and affordably provide electricity supply solutions to American AI companies. We have seen several AI companies also announce plans and partnerships to advance additional clean, baseload solutions, including enhanced geothermal and nuclear energy. Coal production in our country has been displaced by cheaper and cleaner alternatives, driven primarily by market forces.