

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Member Paul Tonko

Markup of 29 Bills, Full Committee

July 20, 2026

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank Chair Palmer, as well as the majority and minority staffs, for working together on two bipartisan bills that were advanced out of the Environment Subcommittee last week.

The CHARM Act and the EMRTAI Act are good first steps to help meet our nation's growing critical mineral demands from untapped domestic sources. Far too many valuable materials end up in landfills or other waste piles. It is clear we need a national strategy to enable better collection and recycling of these minerals because despite being discarded, they represent tremendous opportunities.

Many companies recognize this and are developing exciting and environmentally beneficial technologies that can be piloted to improve the recoverability of critical materials, including through innovative techniques like mineralization. So, I support EPA taking a more proactive role, as envisioned by these two bills, to support the dual goal of environmental remediation and responsible critical mineral re-use.

This can truly be a win-win, and I hope we will continue to work together to ensure that we unlock these supplies responsibly while maintaining high levels of environmental and worker protections.

I would like to also briefly mention my support for several of the energy bills being considered today. But with that said, this Committee has a responsibility to examine the many ways in which the explosive growth of data centers and artificial intelligence are impacting our constituents' lives and livelihoods. Simply put, we are not doing what this moment demands of us.

A PURPA 111(d) amendment is a good first step, but it cannot be our only step. And I would encourage everyone to commit to working on meaningful federal standards that not only fully address electricity cost issues, but also these facilities' air emissions, water usage, and much more.

Thank you. I yield back.