

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Representative Diana DeGette**

***Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Hearing on Oversight of Landmark Laws to
Bolster Our Economy and Lower Prices***

March 29, 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm glad that we have the opportunity to talk about these landmark bills that passed last Congress and the important work that the agencies are doing to implement them.

In some of your testimony and in some comments leading up to today's hearing, the word "unprecedented" was used to describe the scale of the programs and funding created through IIJA, CHIPS and Science, and the IRA. And I agree—these are unprecedented investments. And I'm glad for that—these huge investments are necessary to take on the unprecedented challenges that our country faces, from climate change to health care costs to competition on global markets.

I know that the Democratic members and the Biden administration want to see these programs succeed. And I also know that the agencies in charge of administering these programs take their obligations very seriously here. Far from a "spending spree," these programs are generational investments—the opportunity to truly address deep inequities and the threats of unchecked climate change.

The agencies know that they are not only the first line of attack against these issues but also the first line of defense against waste, fraud, and abuse. So I don't want us to forget that there are people working hard at our federal agencies to ensure that every dollar from the legislation we will discuss today is well spent.

The written testimony of the Inspectors General that we have today focuses very heavily on the risks of these programs. And that makes sense—these witnesses are appropriately focused on understanding the uphill climb that our federal agencies face in implementing these important programs.

But I want to make sure that what doesn't get lost in today's discussion is the risk of inaction. We cannot allow the risk of imperfection in these programs to paralyze them as bridges crumble, as manufacturing lines stall for want of microchips, as the climate becomes increasingly hostile for our children and grandchildren. We have to face those risks and do what can be done to mitigate them so that the programs developed and funded by the IRA, the IIJA, and the CHIPS and Science Act become true American success stories.

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I would argue that the cost of obstructing the implementation of these laws is truly one we cannot afford.

I know that the IGs and GAO have important roles in ensuring that is done correctly, and I look forward to hearing how we can work together to minimize risk while maximizing the rewards that these programs will bring to all Americans.