

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Markup of H.R. 3826, the “Electricity Security and Affordability Act”
January 13, 2014

(As Prepared for Delivery)

All-of-the-above. It is the right approach to our energy policy and to jobs. But as the Obama administration proclaims to support an all-of-the-above energy strategy, its actions toward coal are anything but. All-of-the-above simply cannot include targeting certain energy sources for phase-out, but that is precisely what the EPA’s New Source Performance Standards for greenhouse gases would do to new coal-fired electric generating facilities.

For five years, the administration has been drafting major regulations at a furious pace. And for five years, the administration has been wondering where the jobs are. Well, it is time to put two and two together and acknowledge that this regulatory onslaught comes at a price. Today, we take an important step to reverse any further damage with the Electricity Security and Affordability Act.

Clearly, we need energy diversity if we are to have a more robust economy. Coal remains our largest source of electricity because it is domestically abundant and affordable. And it is ideal for providing the baseload power that ensures reliability for homes and businesses. No wonder China and other industrial competitors around the globe are using more coal, not less.

But in the U.S, a number of EPA rules targeting coal have already led to plant closures and the announcement of additional shutdowns in the near future. Jobs have already been lost, and reliability has been compromised. But the worst is yet to come, as EPA’s proposed New Source Performance Standards would halt any chances of new coal-fired facilities being built.

The health law made sweeping changes to the health care sector without thinking through all of the consequences, and Americans are now paying the price. Let’s not make the same mistake with the energy sector as the administration attempts to regulate what it failed to legislate under the Democrats’ one-party rule.

I applaud both Chairman Whitfield and Senator Manchin for their bipartisan and bicameral bill. The Electricity Security and Affordability Act is a reasonable approach. For example, it requires that the control technologies required be commercially available and demonstrated, which is not the case with carbon capture and storage technologies for power plants. It also provides that Congress would have a role in setting the effective date for regulations applying greenhouse gas emissions standards for existing sources. All in all, it still would allow EPA to develop regulations to reduce emissions, but in a manner that is reasonable and achievable, and protects jobs and the economy.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this bill, whether you have coal in your district, manufacturing in your district, or whether you just have homes and businesses that need the lights to stay on and the electric bills to stay affordable.

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