

Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Hearing on “Quadrennial Energy Review and related Discussion Drafts”
June 2, 2015

(As Prepared for Delivery)

This subcommittee has been working on our bipartisan energy bill for several months now, and many have asked whether there's enough common ground between our efforts and the Obama administration to enact meaningful energy legislation. I believe that this question was answered with a clear yes when the Department of Energy's first installment of its Quadrennial Energy Review (QER) was released last April. This detailed study focuses on the infrastructure implications of America's new energy boom, and many of its recommendations overlap with provisions in our draft energy bill. I welcome Secretary Moniz this morning to discuss the QER and look forward to his input which is always valued by this subcommittee.

Since the 1970s, Congress has developed an energy policy based on assumptions of declining American energy output and increasing import dependence. But that came before the dramatic turnaround in oil and natural gas production over the past decade, and now we are beginning the task of adjusting our energy policy to reflect this new reality. Both the QER and our energy bill are largely based on the need to update Washington's outdated approach.

First and foremost, America's energy boom is necessitating an infrastructure boom. We need more pipelines and storage facilities and all the other elements of the infrastructure for oil and natural gas. We also need more electric transmission lines and upgrades to the existing infrastructure to ensure that our electricity supply is sufficient, reliable, and secure against outside attacks.

Unfortunately, energy infrastructure faces a host of permitting delays and other red tape. These impediments may have been tolerable in the past when relatively little new infrastructure was needed, but now they are holding back the full benefits of the energy boom. Both the QER and energy bill contain a number of measures addressing infrastructure permitting, and both are careful to do so while maintaining existing environmental and safety standards.

The energy boom and the resulting need for infrastructure is a good kind of problem to have, because solving it creates jobs. However, DOE's existing job training programs don't fully reflect the consequences of our changing energy sector, and don't focus on the skills currently in demand. The QER contains recommendations for updating these programs that are similar to the workforce training title in our energy bill authored by Mr. Rush.

The energy growth in the U.S. and across North America also necessitates a new approach towards energy geopolitics. The QER emphasizes the need for integration of energy infrastructure and increased cooperation with Canada and Mexico. We concur that a fully integrated North American energy system would benefit the U.S. as well as its neighbors. Our recently-released energy diplomacy discussion draft contains several provisions to advance this continent-wide approach and to ensure that energy policy decisions take energy security considerations into account.

Beyond North America, we also see the U.S. playing a more prominent role in global energy markets. Doing so can help our allies and trading partners around the world, weaken the position of our energy-exporting adversaries, and add more jobs by expanding the market for

American energy. The discussion draft contains several ideas to enhance America's energy standing in the world. This includes the first-ever provisions to coordinate with our allies on energy security issues as well as provisions to eliminate needless delays in the approval of LNG export facilities.

I would also add that both the QER and the energy bill consider ways to update the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to more closely fit the energy security challenges of 2015 and beyond.

Certainly there are also areas of disagreement, and I am sure Dr. Moniz will let us know about them. Nonetheless, I believe we can put our differences aside and agree on a range of energy reforms that will benefit the American people for decades to come.

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