

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Hearing on “A Legislative Hearing on Eight Energy Infrastructure Bills”
February 2, 2016**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today we will examine eight bills as part of our ongoing bipartisan work to strengthen our domestic energy infrastructure to help keep costs affordable and reliable for consumers and job-creators.

Three of these bills make process changes at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the result of which will be more streamlined agency oversight of the nation’s natural gas infrastructure and electricity system. Specifically, they will allow greater use of aerial survey data in natural gas infrastructure approvals, create a new process for public challenges to certain electric rate changes previously not subject to redress, and raise the monetary threshold for FERC jurisdiction over electricity acquisitions which will help facilitate increases in transmission capacity for the utilities that need it. These are small but important changes that will help yield a more effective regulatory process at FERC, and ultimately a more affordable and reliable supply of energy delivered to folks in Michigan and across the country.

Five of the bills before us today extend the licenses of hydroelectric power projects. Renewable hydropower is a critical component of our all-of-the-above energy strategy, and its benefits are many. Hydro is cheap and reliable and has minimal environmental impacts. Each of these hydroelectric projects will create many high-paying construction jobs and expand the electricity supply for the communities directly served. They are precisely the kinds of power projects that both sides of the aisle can, and should, get behind. But as the law currently stands, the FERC licenses for these five projects have or will soon expire before construction has started, and for reasons outside the control of the companies undertaking them. These bills would extend the licenses and allow construction to commence in the future.

All eight of these bills are steps in the right direction for American energy, and I urge my colleagues to support them.

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