

Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Markup of Energy Legislation
February 10, 2016

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today we begin the markup of 12 energy bills. Each of these bills may be considered small standing alone but together they represent an important step in the direction of a more sensible energy policy and a brighter economic future for this nation. I urge my colleagues to vote yes on all of them.

Nearly all of these bills are good for jobs, either helping to preserve existing ones threatened by regulations or enabling the creation of new ones. This includes the BRICK Act, which may help the 7,000 employees in the brickmaking industry avoid future layoffs, as well as the five hydroelectric bills that will create construction and maintenance jobs for new hydropower projects.

Many of these bills expand the supply of affordable domestic energy and help strengthen the infrastructure that gets this energy to the consumers and businesses that need it. This includes the hydroelectric bills as well as ones like the AIR Survey Act that helps facilitate the approval process for new natural gas pipelines by allowing air survey data to be used.

Several bills would provide much-needed updates to old energy laws. This includes the bill amending the Federal Power Act to bring parity to FERC's review of mergers and acquisitions in the electricity sector so as to reduce red tape for relatively small transactions, as well as the bill replacing offensive terms relating to minorities found in decades-old energy legislation.

Other bills benefit consumers, such as the Fair RATES Act, which expands the opportunities to challenge electric rate increases before FERC, and the EPS Improvement Act, which ensures that the new DOE efficiency standard for external power supplies doesn't place unnecessary burdens on manufacturers developing cutting edge technologies.

Several bills also help the environment, such as the SENSE Act, which ensures that the power plants using waste coal as an energy source can continue to operate. Additionally, the hydropower bills enable the expansion of this clean and renewable energy source.

Each bill in its own way represents progress on the energy and economic issues that matter to this Subcommittee. I hope we can go 12 for 12 today.

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