

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Pete Olson**  
**Subcommittee on Energy**  
**“Powering America: Defining Reliability in a Transforming Electricity**  
**Industry”**  
**September 14, 2017**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Today’s hearing is part one in the Committee’s efforts to address reliability of the nation’s electricity system. Today we have the opportunity to hear from the regulators in charge of the reliable delivery of electricity to millions of Americans. I want to start by sending my thoughts and prayers to the family of former Senator Pete Domenici. He was a dedicated public servant and a titan on energy policy. He will be missed.

I also want to take a minute to acknowledge all those affected across the United States by both Hurricane Harvey—like the people of my district—and Hurricane Irma. These natural disasters have left the electric industry with one of the largest and most complex power restoration efforts in United States history.

To that end, thank you Acting Assistant Secretary Hoffman here today for working with my staff in the days after Hurricane Harvey to give us an update on gasoline supply in Texas. My district is trying to get back on its feet, and it will take a united government to help. Given how much energy Texas contributes to the American economy, I hope you will continue to work on post-Harvey issues in the weeks and months ahead.

Electricity is a fundamental and essential part of our everyday lives. A system failure impacts our health, wealth, and national security. These impacts were felt first-hand in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

The electricity sector is experiencing significant change – driven by fuel costs, decreases in electricity demand, advances in technology, and evolving consumer preferences. These changes present new challenges *and* opportunities.

Our nation’s electricity is supplied by a diverse mix of fuel sources— natural gas, coal, nuclear, wind, hydro-power, solar, and other technologies. Each of these have attributes that help system operators protect reliability. Harvey and Irma highlight the importance of a reliable grid that is not too dependent on one source of energy.

It also showed the importance of being prepared. This committee was instrumental in passing H.R. 3050, the Enhancing State Energy Security Planning and Emergency Preparedness Act. Our bipartisan bill gives States the flexibility they need to address local energy challenges. H.R. 3050 reauthorizes the Department of Energy's State Energy Program. It strengthens our energy emergency planning and preparedness efforts. States need all the tools in the tool box to address fuel supply, infrastructure resilience, energy security, and emergency preparedness.

The second part of this important hearing, which will be held at a later date, will include a panel of witnesses representing different kinds of resources and technologies. These witnesses will provide helpful insight into differences on our grid, but also how sources of energy are working together.

I want to extend a warm welcome to our panel of witnesses. This is the Energy Subcommittee's first government panel this congress. Chairman Chatterjee we are happy to have you join us. We are breathing a sigh of relief now that FERC has quorum. I want you back at your desk ASAP. I also want to thank you Mr. Cauley and Assistant Secretary Hoffman, who are joining us despite all the work being done at NERC and DOE this week. On behalf of the Committee we truly appreciate you being here.