

Chairman Rush Opening Statement- Blue to Green Collar Jobs Development Act

(2/27/19)

I would like to welcome everyone here today. I am truly excited to hold this morning's hearing focusing on HR 1315, the Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act.

We have an excellent panel of majority and minority witnesses who represent many of the same diverse groups that this bill is designed to reach.

While I am eager to hear from all of our guests, I must acknowledge Anne Pramaggiore, who is here representing one of the most forward-looking utilities in the nation, Exelon, based out of one of the most forward-looking cities in the country, my great home city of Chicago.

Right from the outset, I want to make it clear that the bill we have before us today should be viewed as a work in progress.

I am pleased that so many stakeholders have reached out to my office, up to and including the moment that this hearing commenced.

My objective is to continue to work with and incorporate constructive feedback from as many organizations that truly share my goal of putting people to work.

And let me be as frank as possible, my primary and sole objective is exactly that, putting as many people to work in good-paying energy and manufacturing jobs as possible.

The substance of this bill has not changed since the bill was passed through the full Committee and through the House, under Republican control I might add, with overwhelming bipartisan support the last two Congresses.

However, what we have heard time and time again throughout these last few years is that we were not always able to truly help the very same individuals that this bill was designed to reach.

Many potential candidates from low income homes and minority communities, women who serve as heads of households, returning veterans, out-of-work coal and other energy workers were not always able to take advantage of training programs.

These individuals have stressed to me that they needed assistance just to enroll in these facilities.

Additionally, many of these very same candidates were not able to leave lower paying jobs or even give up their job searches simply because they couldn't afford to go through training if they were not getting paid as they worked to advance their careers.

This is just the reality for many of the candidates that this bill is designed to help.

And this is also the reason why we needed to beef up this legislation with actual resources and assistance to help reach these individuals.

So, I truly hope that moving forward we can make this a bipartisan bill once again.

My office is eager and willing to work with any Member, on this Subcommittee and beyond, to address any legitimate concerns and put forward legislation that will hit the mark and help put hundreds or even thousands of hardworking Americans back to work in good-paying jobs and careers.

Once again, I want to thank all of our distinguished witnesses for being here today.

Now I would like to call on my friend and colleague from the great state of Michigan, Ranking Member Upton for his opening statement.