

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden**  
**Subcommittee on Energy**  
**“Oversight of FERC: Ensuring Its Actions Benefit Consumers and the Environment”**  
**June 12, 2019**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Good morning and welcome to our FERC commissioners. I look forward to today’s hearing to examine FERC’s budget proposal and priorities for the year ahead.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission plays an integral role in the safety, security, and economic prosperity of all Americans, given its responsibility for overseeing our nation’s energy infrastructure.

Through authorities provided by Congress, namely the Federal Power Act and the Natural Gas Act, the Commission regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil; reviews proposals to build LNG terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines; and, oversees the licensing of hydropower projects.

As Members of this Committee know, the nation’s energy landscape continues to shift, driven by large increases in the domestic production of crude oil and natural gas, continued technological innovation, existing market and regulatory structures, and evolving consumer preferences.

The U.S. is becoming a net exporter of energy, with growing natural gas pipeline exports and LNG exports. We're also seeing big shifts in the fuels used to generate electricity, with coal and nuclear plants closing at a record pace, and a growing share of new natural gas power plants, and intermittent renewables such as wind and solar coming online—the long-term implications of which are yet to be fully understood. Meanwhile, energy efficiency continues to improve, keeping our consumption relatively flat, even though our economy continues to grow.

These broad trends present both challenges and opportunities. FERC is on the front lines of all of this, with an important mission to ensure safe, reliable, and secure energy for consumers.

As policymakers, we need to be realistic about the challenges we face. To maximize our nation's energy abundance, we need to modernize and expand our infrastructure of pipelines and electric transmission facilities. We need new export capacity for our surplus energy supplies to keep our prices at home low and stable while improving the energy and security of our allies. We need to modernize our grid and examine the state of our energy markets to ensure consumers are benefiting. We also need to strengthen our protections

against emerging cyber and physical threats to our energy infrastructure to ensure they remain resilient and reliable.

For these projects to get built, we need to make sure FERC has the tools it needs to carry out its regulatory responsibilities. The Commission already has a lot on its plate with the difficult task of coordinating a broad range of stakeholders and balancing a wide range of factors, such as property rights, environmental impacts, State and tribal interests, and consumer protections.

In my home state of Oregon, we're dealing with these issues with the Jordan Cove LNG project and the Swan Lake closed loop hydro project. Being on the front lines, I can appreciate how complex the FERC process can be, and understand the importance of getting it right.

While the challenges may sound daunting, I am excited about the opportunities that lay ahead. As we modernize our infrastructure, we have the opportunity to integrate new technologies and services to benefit consumers. We are already seeing this with "smart grid" technologies that help deliver electricity more reliably and efficiently and restore power more quickly after an outage. I am also excited about ways to take advantage of the advances in digital and information

technologies to provide consumers with greater control and choice when it comes to energy consumption.

With our 12-part “Powering America” hearing series in the last Congress, we took a close look at solutions to harden and modernize our energy infrastructure. I expect today’ hearing will give Members another opportunity to explore these important issues. With that, I’d like to thank the Commissioners for appearing before us today, and I look forward to their testimony.