

Chairman Rush Opening Statement – “Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Solutions for the U.S. Building Sector”

Energy Subcommittee

September 20, 2019

I want to thank you all for joining us this morning for this important hearing entitled: Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Solutions for the U.S. Building Sector.

This hearing is part of a series that we will be holding in this Subcommittee and others to highlight areas where we can achieve significant emissions reductions in order to realize a 100 percent clean energy economy by 2050 as Chairman Pallone, Chairman Tonko, and I proposed back in July.

As we know, the building sector is responsible for an estimated 40-percent of energy consumed and greenhouse gas emissions produced nationwide.

Yet, there are enormous opportunities for reducing these emissions through technological advances, efficiency initiatives, and innovative programs, such as Energy Star, smart metering, and others.

Additionally, there are tremendous employment opportunities for putting people to work, in my district and in communities nationwide, in good paying, quality retrofitting jobs that cannot be exported.

In fact, earlier this week E4TheFuture released its 2019 Energy Efficiency Jobs in America report which showed that the energy efficiency sector added more jobs than any other energy sector – for the second straight year, I might add.

The study noted that there are over 2.3 million Americans currently employed in the energy efficiency sector, including more than 89,000 jobs in the state of Illinois, and over 5,000 employed in my district on the Southside of Chicago.

While it is important for Congress to provide resources and establish policies to guide action in the area of efficiency initiatives, as my Blue Collar and Green Collar Jobs bill does, it is also critical that the federal government sets the example through its actions.

There are literally thousands of federally-owned office buildings, courthouses, post offices and the like that must be retrofitted in order to save millions, if not billions of dollars in energy savings.

My staff is working on legislation that would make certain that the Federal Energy Management Program, or FEMP, would ensure that minority business owners and entrepreneurs are able to participate in this multibillion-dollar, taxpayer-funded program.

It is past time for the Department of Energy to open up these contracts so that the same participants of the ‘good old boys’ networks are not the only entities receiving these lucrative government-backed deals.

Tackling this issue of making our homes, schools, and businesses more energy efficient will save money, put people back to work, and help us to address the severe issue of climate change.

So I welcome each of our distinguished panelists to today's hearing and I look forward to engaging them on the best ways to achieve each of these objectives.

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

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