

Statement of Fred Upton
Subcommittee legislative hearing
“Saving Energy: Legislation to Improve Energy Efficiency and Storage”
February 12, 2020

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding today’s legislative hearing to examine six energy bills focused on energy efficiency and grid storage. I am pleased that some of these bills are indeed bi-partisan and reflect close cooperation and compromise among our members.

I would also like to welcome Under Secretary Mark Menezes back to the Committee to provide testimony on the first panel. Under Secretary Menezes served as a chief counsel to the Committee and helped us enact the Energy Policy Act of 2005. On the second panel, we have a range of witnesses representing energy efficiency advocates, architects, home builders, and energy service companies that retrofit federal buildings. I look forward to gathering their views and suggestions to perfect these bills.

As we lay the framework for a modern electricity system, we know that advances in energy storage and energy efficiency will be critical. Not only will they have the potential to provide substantial benefits to consumers in the form of lower electricity bills, they will help us balance the power grid, and use less energy – which will reduce emissions.

The Department of Energy is dedicating substantial resources, cutting across multiple program offices and the National Laboratories, to accelerate the development, commercialization, and utilization of next-generation energy storage

and energy efficiency technologies. I look forward to receiving an update from DOE on the programs already in place today, and the Department's plans for the future.

As we work to modernize the electric grid, one of my top priorities will be to make sure the new technologies being developed and commercialized are resilient to cyber-threats. While it doesn't appear that these bills address cyber, I would like to explore opportunities to address this critical need as well.

With that, I would like to turn to the bills to make a few remarks. I am pleased to support H.R. 4447, the "Expanding Access to Sustainable Energy Act," introduced by Mr. O'Halleran and Mr. Mullin. This is a targeted bill to provide energy storage and microgrid assistance in rural areas.

I am also supporting H.R. 5650, the "Federal Energy and Water Management Performance Act," introduced by Mr. Welch and Mr. Kinzinger to codify DOE's existing Federal Energy Management Program, which helps Federal agencies to meet energy-related goals and facilitate public-private partnerships. This is a good program – it's been in existence for many years already – and it should be authorized.

We also have H.R. 5758, the "Ceiling Fan Improvement Act of 2020," introduced by Mr. Guthrie and Ms. Schakowsky to make technical corrections to the energy conservation standards for ceiling fans. This is a very narrow fix for a specific type of ceiling fan, and I support this bill.

The other three bills before us today may require additional work before moving through Committee. H.R. 2909, “Promoting Grid Storage Act of 2019,” implements a new government spending program that could be duplicative of existing programs and may not serve the interest of taxpayers or consumers. H.R. 1744, the “STORAGE Act,” imposes a new regulatory mandate on States to consider technologies that may be infeasible and too costly. H.R. 3962, the “Energy Savings and Industrial Competitiveness Act,” is the “kitchen sink” of energy efficiency provisions. This bill has been around for multiple congresses and some of the provisions – especially the energy codes – have been the subject of disagreement among stakeholders.

With that, I look forward to hearing from the witnesses and gathering their suggestions. I plan to keep an open mind and encourage my colleagues to do the same. Let’s reach across the aisle and get to work.

Thank you, I yield back.