

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton**  
**Hearing on “Generating Equity: Improving Clean Energy Access**  
**and Affordability”**  
**October 1, 2020**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding today’s hearing on energy access and affordability — a very timely topic as we head into the winter months, still battling COVID and the economic fallout from the pandemic.

Here in the United States, we are blessed with the most reliable and affordable supplies of energy and electricity in the world. Diversity is the key to our success, which is why I support an all-of-the-above approach to energy. Nationwide, our top sources for electricity generation — in ranked order — are natural gas, coal, nuclear, wind, hydropower, and solar. Most Americans and businesses rely on gasoline and diesel for their transportation needs. Last year, petroleum products accounted for 96% of total energy used for transportation. Electric vehicles accounted for less than 1%.

It is important to understand why we, as a nation, have such a diverse fuel mix, and how it makes us more secure and more competitive than other nations. In the Pacific Northwest, they have plenty of cheap hydropower. Some parts of the country have more wind, more sun, or more fossil resources. In some States, nuclear energy makes the most sense. The reality is that weather, population, and geography vary wildly across the nation, making it impossible to make sweeping generalizations.

My home state of Michigan, for example, is also unique. For one, Michigan households use more energy than the U.S. average. When the temperature drops, we use a lot of natural gas for electricity and to heat

our homes because it is often more efficient and affordable. We also use a lot of propane.

This is why a one-sized-fits-all Federal mandate — like the proposals to ban natural gas and gasoline cars — is the wrong approach. Instead, the proper role of the Federal government is to promote innovation and technological development; and to ensure competition and consumer choice.

It would be foolish to bet it all on any one technology or energy resource. Congress does not have a crystal ball. Rather than mandate a top-down clean energy standard or a ban on fossil fuels, let us learn from the experience of other States.

California's "Rush to Green" is a perfect example. They have monopoly energy providers, an unstable grid that is prone to blackouts, and the nation's highest prices. I have serious concerns about a forced transition to implement the California standard nationwide.

With that, I look forward to today's hearing to learn what Congress can do to make energy more reliable and affordable for all Americans. I would also like to welcome our University of Michigan witness, Dr. Reames.

I plan to use today's hearing to focus on ways to promote innovation and new technologies. I think it will also be useful to examine the lessons-learned from States like California, that appear to be struggling to provide reliable and affordable energy to consumers.

My home state of Michigan, and States like Texas that are leading the nation, have different models for incorporating clean energy. The key is keeping prices stable and affordable. I also look forward to discussion about carbon-free nuclear energy, which is vital to meeting our shared clean energy goals.

The bottom line is that we all want to see cleaner energy technologies, but whether we are talking about power generation or passenger vehicles, we are not going to get there by picking winners and losers. We should learn from the failures of the past and work together to make energy more available, reliable, and affordable for all.

With that, I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before us today. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with you on these important issues, which I know we both care deeply about. Thank you, I yield back.