

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Subcommittee on Energy
“A Smarter Investment: Pathways to a Clean Energy Future”
February 18, 2021**

As Prepared for Delivery

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want to thank Dr. Burgess for the extra effort to sit in the lead Republican chair today, he certainly is at the right place at the right time for this hearing.

Texas has the lowest energy cost in the country along with the fastest transition to clean energy. With that, let's recognize there are many good ideas for developing cleaner energy systems to ensure we win the future.

The key is to recognize how we unleash American innovation and free enterprise--- using all our resources to protect our economic and energy security.

We should build, not destroy.

We should use our abundant natural resources like Hydro and natural gas, not shutter them.

We should enable people to deploy, take risks, improve, and create the next great advances so America leads a new era of entrepreneurship and innovation.

We can pursue practical policies to innovate a cleaner energy future... if we work together.

We should be clear-eyed about what's at stake if we get this wrong.

The radical environmental left is pushing top-down, one-size-fits-all mandates and costs on Americans, which will threaten our nation's energy dominance and our national security.

This is clear in the repeated attacks on our oil and natural gas industry, and its people, which has provided tremendous opportunity and driven advances in cleaner energy generation that are benefiting the globe.

Yet the left is rejecting fossil energy, while also talking about transforming America's electricity system in 14 years, and the entire energy economy in 30 years.

How is that possible?

What does this transformation really mean for our economy? What does it mean for families and workers?

We should look beyond the rhetoric to understand what the rush to green is really about.

We should understand the consequences on energy reliability, household costs, and security.

TEXAS

The importance of reliability has been on full, heart-wrenching display this week in Texas, the South, and the Midwest

At times, available electricity could not meet the record-high demand for power from the extreme cold.

Wind turbines across the state froze.

Natural gas production was shut in.

This ultimately deprived the grid of critical energy and power, just as demand spiked.

There wasn't enough natural gas supply or baseload generation to close the gap, especially because of other weather issues and emergency priorities to heat homes and hospitals.

On Monday—to prevent more widespread power failure-- the Texas grid operator, ERCOT, directed utilities to implement outages that eventually affected an estimated five million households.

The emergency exposed systemic weaknesses relating in part to over-reliance on intermittent renewables.

It's a powerful reminder that electricity reliability is a life and death matter.

FAMILIES

The supply of energy also is a serious pocketbook matter, especially for low-income households.

Low and middle-income families must be top of mind if this discussion turns to new clean energy mandates and taxes.

Especially during the pandemic recovery, families cannot afford an increase in their electricity and gasoline bills.

According to the Department of Energy, states with the highest low-income energy burdens – 10 percent or higher – are in the Southeast.

For mostly heating and cooling... Low-income households there use about 36 percent more power than the national average for low-income households in other regions of the country.

Fortunately, states—like my home state of Washington— also enjoy some of the lowest electricity rates in the nation thanks to our hydropower.

But imagine how families will be squeezed if top-down energy policies increased the price of electricity?

What happens when people in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, or South Carolina have to pay the same rates as people in California or Connecticut?

SECURITY

And then there is economic and national security.

The rush to green seeks to ban fossil energy—and its quality jobs for millions of people.

It will massively increase reliance on renewables and electrification of transportation.

This domestic policy has global implications.

First it won't do much to reduce global emissions.

Global emissions will keep going up as [developing nation's seek access to affordable energy](#).

It will also hurt America's security and competitive edge.

Absent major changes in our domestic mining and manufacturing base, increasing reliance on wind, solar, and electric batteries trades energy security for energy **insecurity**.

It pushes carbon emissions offshore and increases reliance on Chinese supply chains. It does nothing meaningful for global climate change.

We can do better. And I hope my colleagues across the aisle begin to pay attention to what is really at stake—for reliability, jobs, affordability, and our nation's economic security.