

Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
“The CLEAN Future Act and Electric Transmission:
Delivering Clean Power to the People”

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Thank you, Chairman Rush. Now, what has become clear to the American public over the past year has been the role of state and federal policies that influence affordable, reliable energy and power. Keeping the lights on is needed for a prosperous society, and vital for our health and safety. Policymakers should not lose sight of that.

And it’s not just about keeping the lights on. Right now in Eastern Washington and across the Pacific Northwest it’s about keeping the fans and air conditioning on too. We’re currently experiencing an extreme heatwave. There are emergency cooling centers open in my hometown of Spokane, where temperatures are hovering around 110.

Last night one of the major utilities in the area notified customers of mandatory outages because it was seeing the second-highest level of demand over the past year. We aren’t strangers to extreme weather in the Pacific Northwest. These weather events have solidified the importance of a reliable power supply.

This past winter, Washington state had a harmful deep freeze that drove up energy demand. Fortunately, the [four Lower Snake River](#) dams came to the rescue and boosted hydroelectric output to provide the needed dispatchable power. They picked-up the slack when one of the largest dams in the Columbia River system had to shut down—reducing threats of serious power shortages.

Yet even in Washington State, we face calls to dismantle these important, clean energy sources for the sake of agendas that fail to prioritize reliable delivery of power for people. When these policies undermine affordable, reliable delivery of energy and power, serious harms to public health and safety can follow.

The heat has not been isolated to the Pacific Northwest. In recent weeks, both [California](#) and [Texas](#) electric grid operators have urged people to conserve electricity use as heat waves threatened supply disruptions. Last month, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, NERC, issued its [summer reliability assessment](#). The report said California is at risk of energy emergencies during *normal* summer demand, and high risk if weather events cause above normal demand across the West. We are seeing that happen now.

Texas, the upper Midwest, and New England are all at risk if there is a major weather event driving up power demand, according to the report. As these examples indicate, we are witnessing an electricity reliability crisis slowly unfold across large regions of the country. And much of this can be traced to state environmental and federal regulatory policies from renewable energy standards to electricity market regulatory structures that drive out traditional baseload generation assets.

Meanwhile, the left's "rush to green" agenda doubles down on wind and solar and building lots more transmission. To meet the Administration's emissions targets, the push is for massive electrification on [an unprecedented scale and pace](#). For the next 15 years, it would amount to a construction program 600 percent larger than any utility build-out we've seen in the last half-century, as [one witness](#) explained this year.

You cannot do this without extraordinary mandates and costs on workers and families. Testimony before the Committee has

already outlined the [growing public](#) resistance to siting, permitting, and building new transmission. Today, building new transmission can take 15 years or more. And there are several examples of key projects running into substantial opposition.

Which brings us to the CLEAN Future Act provisions that will take us back to the dark ages. There are certainly practical reforms to consider for transmission policy, to maximize the reliability benefits of a robust transmission system. However, the rush to green incentives and mandates in this legislation may only undermine reliability—and at a great cost.

The bill seeks to prioritize massive electrification and renewable build-out, without regard to impacts on affordable, reliable power. It seeks to make it easier to site transmission while making it harder to build natural gas pipelines, which are critical for renewables. Also troubling is the rush to mandate regulatory structures that prioritize weather-dependent energy at the expense of traditional baseload and dispatchable energy.

Adding more top-down mandates to “decarbonize” our grid means creating an affordability crisis—as California-style costs are spread to other regions of America. We should reject these mandates and lead on what matters for American families -- ensuring affordable, reliable power.

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