

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Energy Chairman Bobby L. Rush

Hearing on “The CLEAN Future Act and Electric Transmission: Delivering Clean Power to the People”

June 29, 2021

Good morning. Today, the Subcommittee on Energy convenes for a hearing on the CLEAN Future Act as well as other legislation to address electric transmission and the delivery of clean, reliable power. As this Subcommittee has discussed in great detail, the energy sector is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Despite this fact, some of the greatest opportunities to address the threat of climate change are under the auspices of this sector.

The generation of electricity, and its delivery to consumers and businesses, is undoubtedly essential to the U.S. economy. However, a 21st century clean energy economy necessitates additional planning and infrastructure investment to advance the large-scale delivery of clean energy in order to effectively cut greenhouse gas pollution and mitigate climate change. A fundamental instrument that is key to the broad deployment of reliable and affordable clean energy is electric transmission.

Speaking frankly, we need a major expansion of the electric transmission system to establish a net zero clean energy economy. According to a report from Princeton University, the U.S. will need to triple the size of its current electricity transmission system in just 15 short years. Adding to this, the American Society Civil Engineers reports that nearly 70 percent of the existing 600,000 circuit miles of transmission lines are half past their life span.

Given these factors and the ongoing discussions about our nation’s infrastructure, today’s legislative hearing is tremendously important. This is particularly true as today’s bills all take aim at addressing the buildout of electricity transmission infrastructure to achieve our climate and clean energy goals. As a model, the CLEAN Future Act — which I take great pride in leading with Chairmen Pallone and Tonko — would establish several policies to facilitate resilient and decarbonized electricity supply all while enhancing Federal authority to those ends through the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. It also supports the deployment of “non-transmission alternatives” that can put aside the need for additional transmission infrastructure.

Today’s legislative hearing also includes several other bills authored by my esteemed Subcommittee colleagues, which will help us achieve our clean energy goals. With that in mind, I yield the balance of my time to the Gentleman from California, Congressman Peters.