

Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
“The Changing Energy Landscape: Oversight of FERC”

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As prepared for delivery

Thank you, Chairman Rush. Let me also welcome the Commissioners today. Since our last hearing in 2019, we now have three new Commissioners, a departing Commissioner Chatterjee and Mr. Glick has been elevated to Chairman. This shifting leadership makes our oversight particularly useful and timely today.

How FERC executes its mission can have profound impacts on the price of energy, and our security. Also, the ability of utilities to provide affordable, and reliable energy and power to people.

We cannot forget this as we examine the Commission’s activities and agenda today, and as we examine proposed energy and environmental policies here in Congress. What really matters is that we make sure policies work for people -- to protect their way of life.

We must make sure our federal laws and policies enable—not undermine—access to affordable, reliable energy. This is necessary for a prosperous society, for the energy to power innovations, keep costs low, and support jobs. It is essential for assuring public health and safety.

Heart-wrenching examples when the power goes out or the fuels stop flowing have proved the point: in California, Texas, the East Coast, even in my district in Spokane. There’s a role for clean energy policies but not as a substitute for affordable energy that keeps the lights on.

Across the nation, state and federal environmental and regulatory policies are undermining affordable, reliable energy. State renewable energy mandates and certain existing electricity market structures are driving out traditional baseload generation to the detriment of the public.

As official assessments indicate, we are witnessing an electricity reliability crisis unfold across large regions of the country. In May, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's [summer reliability assessment](#) confirmed what California grid operators were also reporting that the state remained at risk of energy emergencies during normal summer demand, and high risk if weather events cause above-normal demand across the West.

Texas and Louisiana, the upper Midwest, and New England are all at risk if a major weather event drives up power demand, according to the report. What will happen if current unreliability trends continue?

What happens when more baseload generation and clean nuclear is shuttered? What happens when regions have no choice but to rely upon weather-dependent wind and solar transmitted from other regions? What happens if the “rush to green” and Green New Deal socialist agenda effectively nationalizes expensive California-style mandates on the rest of the nation?

We've discussed in many hearings how certain measures of the CLEAN Future Act would nationalize decarbonization goals, regardless of cost or reliance on China. Federal clean energy mandates will drive out fossil generation in regions dependent upon it—raising costs on low- and middle income workers and undermining their economic opportunities.

Mandating questionable electricity “market” structures will take control and accountability away from states, whether states and communities like it or not. And none of this stops the radical left from depriving states and communities of reliable, affordable energy. It won’t relieve radical efforts to erase the benefits of firm, dispatchable energy. Even in Washington State, there continue to be extreme and misguided efforts to dismantle the four Lower Snake River dams that are important, clean, reliable energy sources.

FERC may not have any say in what Congress or the states do, but there is no question it must properly deal with the harsh consequences of policies that will make us dependent on China and take America back to the dark ages. Its regulatory oversight and decision-making will help shape the kind of energy systems we have in the future.

What matters today is will FERC focus on its core mission so the reliable, affordable delivery of energy and power remains the highest priority? Will the hardworking men and women of this country be central in its policies, or will they be subverted to environmental agendas that threaten to fail our most basic energy needs. I look forward to the discussion today.