

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

Hearing on “Securing our Energy Infrastructure: Legislation to Enhance Pipeline Reliability”

January 19, 2022

Good morning, everyone. I want to start by acknowledging what an honor it has been for me to chair this Subcommittee the past three years and to thank those of you who reached out with well-wishes following my recent announcement that I will not seek reelection. It has been an honor to serve with such fine colleagues on both sides of the aisle, and I want you to know that I’m not done yet! I look forward to continuing to work with all of you in this last year of the 117th Congress to continue to advance legislation that will help all Americans.

Turning to the topic before us today, I would like to thank everyone for joining us this morning for this vital hearing on enhancing the reliability of our energy infrastructure and my Energy Product Reliability Act.

The energy system that 330 million Americans depend upon for heat, electricity, and transportation is only as strong as its weakest link. And unfortunately, a year ago in Texas, we saw this first-hand when our natural gas infrastructure failed, leaving 4.5 million people without power and taking over 100 lives.

While the electric wires that bring Americans power across the country are subject to reliability standards set by NERC (*pronounced nurr-k*), no such standards exist for pipelines. All Americans deserve reliable access to energy; and they need to know that the pipelines that deliver that energy are dependable. To achieve this goal, we must work together once again, just like we did in 2005 when we wrote and passed the Energy Policy Act. The provisions of that legislation that established electric reliability standards have worked well, and with them, we began the work of ensuring that the electric system that Americans depend upon is reliable. My bill continues that effort.

I want to stress — my legislation accompanying this hearing is not final. It marks the *beginning* of the legislative process, not the end. I look forward to hearing what our witnesses today have to say on the bill, and I welcome any constructive suggestions from all Members of this Subcommittee. To my Republican friends specifically, I want to emphasize that electricity reliability is an issue we’re all concerned about. For that reason, my staff and I stand ready to work hand-in-hand with you. We are open to suggestions on the best pathway forward.

With that, I look forward to this morning’s hearing and discussion, and I am delighted to recognize my friend, the Ranking Member from Michigan, Mr. Upton, for five minutes to make an opening statement.