

Opening Statement of Republican Leader Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy
Legislative Hearing on “Securing Our Energy Infrastructure: Legislation to
Enhance Pipeline Reliability”
January 19, 2021

As Prepared For Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, to our witnesses, for appearing before the Subcommittee to provide your testimony. Welcome back, Chairman Glick, it’s nice to have you here again. And special welcome, Deputy Secretary Turk, to your first Energy and Commerce Committee hearing. We look forward to working closely with you in your new role at the Department of Energy.

I am deeply concerned about the direction of our country under President Biden’s leadership. We all saw the economic report last week; consumer prices and inflation rose to 7% in December, the highest rate in 40 years. We have labor shortages and supply chain disruptions impacting the entire economy. Energy prices are soaring to seven-year-highs and American families are suffering. The Biden Administration’s anti-fossil fuel agenda is directly contributing to record high gas prices and soaring utility bills as the winter heating season is upon us.

The Administration’s response to surging inflation and sky-high energy bills is to shutdown critical pipelines like Keystone XL and potentially even Line 5, ban

drilling on Federal lands, and force Americans to buy more expensive and less reliable electric cars and appliances. These are not real solutions.

Two weeks ago, a brutal winter storm hit the East Coast. Half a million people lost their electricity and hundreds of drivers were stranded on freezing roads overnight. Just think what would have happened, think of the people who could have died, if all the cars were electric and people couldn't use natural gas to heat and cook. If it is not already clear to everyone, we rely on fossil fuels. Simply put, the fantasy land Green New Deal agenda of offshore wind farms, roof top solar, and electric batteries will not cut it.

The topic of this hearing is completely off base and out of touch with the realities facing Americans today. We need real leadership from this Administration and the Democratic Majority. America is facing an economic crisis and an energy crisis, and the Majority has scheduled a legislative hearing on a bill to increase energy prices further and eliminate fossil fuels by shutting down pipelines.

The bill is a sweeping power grab, preempting States and local jurisdictions from regulating all types of energy infrastructure, from the oil and natural gas wells, to the gas station where Americans fill up, and to the appliances in their homes. The bill would dramatically expand FERC, transforming a relatively tiny

agency into a behemoth with regulatory powers over America's entire energy system.

We are not just talking about interstate pipelines and the bulk power system that crosses state lines. This bill would impose new Federal taxes, fees, and regulations on all energy in this country. Americans are not asking for this bill.

With unanimous consent, I would like to enter into the record a letter from State regulators and the people who deliver energy to homes and businesses. The letters lay out specific concerns with the legislation; concerns that I believe are shared by many members of this Committee, on both sides of the aisle.

Mr. Chairman, respectfully, I would argue that we should focus our efforts on our bipartisan bill, H.R. 3078, the Pipeline and LNG Facility Cybersecurity Preparedness Act. We reintroduced this bill in response to the Colonial pipeline attack last year, and we still have important work to do to get this bill across the finish line.

In October of last year, Republicans on this Committee wrote to Secretary Granholm to conduct oversight of DOE's handling of the energy crisis. We also wrote to Chairman Pallone requesting a hearing to investigate how the Administration's actions are contributing to energy price increases. Everyone

knows energy prices are the number one issue right now — the highest prices in seven years. Yet, the Majority has not scheduled a hearing.

I intend to use today's hearing to confront the real issues facing Americans. What is the Administration doing to slow inflation and lower gas prices? Why is President Biden asking Russia and OPEC to pump more oil while putting American energy workers out of a job? Why is FERC delaying permitting decisions on critical natural gas pipelines that would improve grid reliability and lower utility bills for Americans?

These are the questions on the minds of Americans and they deserve the attention of this Committee.

With that, thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.