

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy “Legislative Hearing to Strengthen Energy
Infrastructure, Efficiency, and Financing”**

June 22, 2022

As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, to our witnesses, for appearing before us today to provide your testimony.

Mr. Chairman, the United States is plunging deeper and deeper into an energy crisis, driven by roaring inflation, anti-fossil fuel policies, and demand shocks across our economy. Our constituents are rightly concerned about the lack of leadership from President Biden and some Members of Congress. The annual inflation rate in May was 8.6% - the highest level since 1981. Gasoline is averaging \$5 nationwide, with drivers in California and other states paying over \$6. More than half of the nation will be at elevated risk for power outages this summer as reliable base-load power generation is retired in favor of weather dependent “green” alternatives like wind and solar.

The bills before us today will not alleviate the pain that Americans are feeling at the pump or reduce the risk of blackouts. And while this is supposed to be a legislative hearing, the Department of Energy is not even here to provide testimony.

Republicans on the Energy and Commerce Committee have been sounding the alarm since Day 1 of President Biden's term in office. Energy prices surged following the President Biden's cancelation of the Keystone XL pipeline and the moratorium on Federal leasing. Gas prices went up even further as the EPA and FERC began to tighten the screws on infrastructure permitting.

Instead of addressing the energy crisis head on, President Biden is traveling to Saudi Arabia to ask OPEC and Russia for more oil. Members of this Committee should hear from American energy producers on what it will take to produce more oil here at home.

I am concerned by what appears to be a naïve understanding of the scope and scale of the energy crisis, and what is required to address it. Contrary to the rhetoric from the White House and DOE, high gasoline prices will not encourage Americans to buy more expensive electric vehicles.

Residential electricity prices are also increasing at record pace, and China is consolidating its control over more than 90% of critical minerals used in batteries and solar panels. If we do not reinvigorate our domestic mining industry, we are going to see more spikes in raw materials – like lithium – that will drive up costs for consumers.

I am pleased to see my bill, H.R. 1599, “Securing America’s Critical Minerals Supply Act,” is included in today’s legislative hearing. H.R. 1599 will build on DOE’s energy security mission, by providing tools for DOE to secure a reliable domestic supply of critical energy resources, including critical minerals.

We cannot trade away the energy security America has achieved through the domestic production of coal, oil and natural gas for Chinese batteries and solar panels. It is a national security imperative that we produce the energy we need right here at home. It’s that simple.

Turning to the other bills on the docket today, I am supportive of H.R. 5292, the “Energy Accountability Act” introduced by the late Don Young of Alaska. This legislation is a good government bill that will disqualify companies like Solyndra who have defaulted on a loan from participating in DOE’s loan guarantee program.

Some of these bills will need more work and an additional hearing with DOE before they are ready to be marked up by the Subcommittee. I have questions about H.R. 8053, the “GRID Act,” which appears to build on DOE’s program to protect critical defense infrastructure. Members of the Committee should have the ability to question DOE on H.R. 7947 and H.R. 8053, which are bills that will modify DOE’s weatherization program and appliance standards. It

appears that both bills include new language that could have broad and far-reaching implications for taxpayers and consumers.

For example, H.R. 8053 includes a new concept that would allow DOE to mandate demand response, which is a capability that allows a grid operator to remotely monitor and control residential appliances to reduce electricity demand. I believe this raises serious privacy concerns.

Each of the bills before us today deserves careful consideration from the Subcommittee, and I look forward to working with the Majority to ensure regular order. With that, I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before us today and I look forward to the testimony.

Thank you, I yield back.