

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Representative Scott Peters**

***Field Hearing on “American Energy Expansion: Improving Local Economies and
Communities’ Way of Life”***

February 16, 2023

It is good to be back in West Texas.

On previous trips, I visited Midland and Lubbock and learned about the oil and gas industry and local communities. I learned a lot about fracking and drilling, and I came away with an understanding of how this industry is not just an economic feature of Texas, but a cultural one. I met people whose families had been working in energy for generations. It’s hard, honest work and they are proud of it. Today, I am excited to continue the dialogue.

To start, I want to say this country has never solved any great problem -- whether it’s sending men to the moon, winning a world war, or beating back a global pandemic – with the participation of just one political party.

This Congress, I have three energy priorities that are ripe for bipartisan collaboration. First, permitting reform. In the 118th Congress, we can work together to make it easier not harder to build. For my Republican colleagues, this means looking beyond just oil and gas and truly investing in an all the above energy strategy. In the coming decades, we must build massive amounts of energy infrastructure including transmission lines, solar, wind power, carbon capture, nuclear, and more.

Texas is a great example of this energy future. We know the state is a global leader in oil and gas. But it also leads elsewhere. The American Clean Power Association found that Texas is the national leader in clean energy development, just ahead of my home state of California, which is bound to get some smiles here. The state is first in the nation in wind power and second in solar and storage. 40% of the electricity in Texas comes from wind, solar, and nuclear. We can learn valuable lessons from Texas and admit that picking technology winners and losers is a failed strategy, whether you are focused solely on natural gas in Texas or solar in California.

Back to permitting reform, for my Democratic colleagues, we must accept that environmental laws written in the 1970s primarily to stop bad projects can and should be updated to meet the environmental challenges of today. We can work together to speed up our processes without sacrificing environmental outcomes.

My second priority is making our energy system cleaner. We agree that oil and gas isn’t going away any time soon. We can also agree that making U.S. oil and gas production cleaner is

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good for our economy and environment. For the oil and gas industry, the focus must be methane, a super pollutant more potent and harmful than CO₂.

Last year, Democrats passed the Inflation Reduction Act which included billions of dollars to monitor and reduce methane emissions at oil and gas facilities. This money can help address the methane problem without breaking the bank for companies. I'd love to work with you to make sure this money is spent effectively in Texas.

Third, advanced energy technologies. The U.S. should lead the world in developing and exporting technologies like carbon capture, geothermal, direct air capture, and advanced nuclear. The U.S. oil and gas industry can help develop carbon capture and carbon removal because they have the knowledge, labor force, and capital to take these technologies from good ideas to large-scale deployment. We can clean up our domestic energy production and help the world do the same, positioning the US as a global energy and climate leader.

Thank you all for being with us today. I yield back.