

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone

Subcommittee Markup of 9 Bills

February 28, 2023

Today Committee Republicans are once again showing that they plan to prioritize the needs of big oil and gas companies over the needs of the American people. It's unfortunate because there are many Members on our side of the aisle who have voiced interest in durable, bipartisan solutions that would allow us to build more clean energy infrastructure to ensure we lead the world in the transition to a clean energy economy. This markup demonstrates that's not the approach this Republican majority is looking to take.

Republicans love to talk about an "all of the above" approach to building out energy assets, but *none* of the bills we are marking up addresses or even references clean energy.

This markup is in stark contrast to Committee Democrats delivering historic wins for the American people. We enacted the Inflation Reduction Act which has already created more than 100,000 good-paying clean energy American jobs, will cut costs for working families, and tackle the worsening climate crisis.

Today, Republicans are bringing up eight partisan bills that have no chance at ever becoming law. They know this because these are literally some of the same bills that they pushed through the last time they were in charge of the House more than four years ago. At that time, there was a Republican President and a Republican-controlled Senate, and they still couldn't get them enacted. But here they are again – attempting to move these same old bills.

H.R. 1058, the "Promoting Cross-border Energy Infrastructure Act," is nothing more than a shadow approval of the Keystone XL pipeline masquerading as legislation. It establishes that every single cross-border energy project is presumptively in the public interest unless proven otherwise. This is nothing more than a green light for oil and gas pipeline developers to construct international facilities without sufficient oversight from the federal government.

H.R. 1130, the so-called "Unlocking our Domestic LNG Potential Act," removes the requirement that the Department of Energy determine proposed LNG exports are within the public interest. This Republican bill would lead to more American LNG being sent to China. So much for Republican claims of being tough on China.

By removing the public interest test for natural gas exports – both H.R. 1130 and H. Con. Res. 17 – create a handout to our geopolitical rivals and to Republicans' fossil fuel friends at the expense of American consumers. At a time when many Americans across the country are suffering from high energy costs this winter, these Republican bills would ensure that the problem worsens in the coming years.

H.R. 1115 effectively makes the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) the final arbiter on all things environmental review-related for natural gas pipelines. Unfortunately, in that process, it sets up a likely adversarial relationship between FERC and other federal and state agencies that play a role both in writing environmental reviews for pipelines and in the permitting process.

I understand that Republicans believe this bill will speed up the process for natural gas pipeline approval, but I think it will actually do the opposite, and turn what is currently a thorough, collaborative process between agencies into an adversarial one. In fact, this was the fear that FERC's Director of the Office of Energy Projects testified to back in 2017.

Most of the remainder of the bills here are meaningless — pure signaling to the fossil fuel industry that Republicans support them. H. Con. Res. 14 is a futile grasp to resurrect the Keystone XL Pipeline, showing Republicans are still stuck in the energy debates of the last decade. H.R. 150 would override our environmental and public lands laws to protect big oil and gas' ability to frack, and H.R. 1085 merely generates a report representing the oil industry's views under the auspices of a government agency.

There is one bill here that does have some potential. H.R. 1160, a bipartisan bill cosponsored by Representatives Schrier and Walberg, gets at an issue where we've been able to find some common ground with Republicans – energy infrastructure cybersecurity. We support the Department of Energy's role in protecting our electric infrastructure and historically we have worked together on this important issue.

Aside from this bill, none of the others offer real solutions to the complex energy problems and challenges of the 21st century. If Republicans really want to unleash American energy, I invite them to stop trying to tear down critical climate and environmental programs and work with us to build a better future for all by finding a way to build clean energy quickly without endangering our environment.