

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

Hearing on “The Fiscal Year 2024 Department of Energy Budget”

May 11, 2023

After hearing from our Committee’s Republican leadership, I have to say I support President Biden’s energy agenda. Frankly, I don’t think we’ll be able to compete in a global economy – certainly not with China – if we don’t move forward with it. H.R. 1 would destroy our economy and reverse the remarkable and robust job creation that we’ve seen under President Biden. So in my opinion, you are doing everything necessary to compete with China and recognize the competition that we face with China.

With the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we’ve certainly given the Department of Energy (DOE) a lot of work, and I’m looking forward to getting updates on some of these important clean energy programs today.

Let me start with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which invests \$1.2 trillion to modernize our nation’s aging and crumbling infrastructure. The law included important funding for DOE to invest in American manufacturing, increase access to energy efficiency, and make our nation’s electric grid more clean and secure.

That was the first step and then we followed it up by passing the Inflation Reduction Act. The law provided \$369 billion to build more clean energy in America, create clean energy jobs, lower energy costs for American families and slash greenhouse gas pollution.

DOE is also playing a major role in implementing these funds. They are supporting innovative clean energy projects that are investing in communities all around the nation and have helped create 142,000 good-paying clean energy jobs since the law was enacted in August. They are also providing rebates to consumers for more efficient home appliances to lower energy costs for hardworking American families. And they are addressing emissions at America’s industrial facilities as well.

These two laws are making a real difference in communities all around the nation – including in Republican Congressional districts, but not one Republican on this Committee supported either of these bills. That was bad enough, but now they are trying to hold our economy hostage by threatening a default crisis if we don’t go along with their demands to roll back these crucial investments and put polluters over people.

Last month, House Republicans passed their Default on America Act that does the bidding of Big Oil and Gas, increases energy costs for working families, and sets American workers up to be left behind by abandoning our homegrown clean energy industry. The Republican bill will cut important programs that provide rebates to consumers for home

appliances and remove funding for workforce programs in these new and developing industries. It also repeals key energy programs from the Inflation Reduction Act, repeals the zero-emission nuclear power tax credit that was praised by our witnesses at a recent hearing on nuclear issues, and raises taxes on American energy.

Committee Republicans have not only been trying to undermine these new laws, but they have attempted to manufacture scandals that simply do not exist. Last month, they even sent a letter to you, Secretary Granholm, criticizing your “international travel” to Puerto Rico. Of course, Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens for over 100 years and with all the energy issues there, we should be commending the Secretary for visiting the island and prioritizing their issues.

At the end of the day, Republicans’ energy policies look to the past while Democrats and the Biden Administration are looking to the future with our commitment to the clean energy transition. The President’s DOE budget request includes important funding that will help us meet our decarbonization goals and build on the success of the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

I also want to highlight the good work that the Department is doing outside of these landmark laws. Last year, DOE periodically released crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to help lower gasoline prices at the pump for Americans following Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.

Today, the price of a barrel of crude oil is \$34 cheaper than it was a year ago. The price of a gallon of gasoline is nearly 80 cents cheaper than it was a year ago. So, Secretary Granholm, thank you for the Department’s decisive action.

Thank you again for joining us today. I yield back the balance of my time.