

Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Opening Statement— Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security:
“Powering America's Economy, Security, and Our Way of Life: Examining
the State of Grid Reliability”
September 28, 2023
As prepared for delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to our witnesses.

Our energy dominance and reliable grid is what powers our way of life.

For more than 100 years, generations of Americans have come to rely on electricity, to the point where many of us don't even think about it anymore.

This critical resource not only keeps the lights.

...it heats our homes in the cold winter months and cools them in the summer.

It's the reason we have fresh produce at the grocery store, it's how we're able to stay connected to our friends and loved ones...

It powers life-saving medical equipment in our hospitals and nursing homes...

...supports emergency services and is foundational to America's banking system.

Affordable and reliable electricity has raised our standard of living... driven technological innovation...and improved our health and wellbeing. We should celebrate and build on that legacy in America, take steps to build on the prosperity, and ensure people continue to have an opportunity for a better life.

America is at a cross-roads. After decades of rapid growth and relative stability, our electric grid is becoming strained.

According to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, two-thirds of the nation is now at risk for a power outage.

We're seeing increases in rolling blackouts and brownouts.

As states move towards intermittent, weather dependent energy sources, like wind and solar...

...they're phasing out more reliable baseload sources.

While there is certainly a place for wind and solar in our overall energy mix, we cannot rely on them to power the whole country.

In order to meet demand, we also need to utilize our most affordable and reliable base-load sources, like natural gas, nuclear, coal, and hydropower plants.

That is the best way to reduce emissions, keep energy costs low, and ensure power is available for households and businesses.

It will also help us cut China out of our supply chains, which currently controls the critical materials necessary for sources like wind and solar.

The reality is that weather-dependent wind and solar cannot achieve these goals on their own.

Just ask the people of California, a state that imports a significant amount of hydroelectric power from Washington state....to support it's grid when inconsistent resources like wind and solar can't produce enough energy to meet demand.

Rather than a radical energy transition, we should be working to expand our energy resources through an all-of-the-above strategy.

That's the best way to bring down costs for Americans, who are currently paying more while getting less when it comes to electricity.

An energy expansion will ensure families aren't having to make tough choices about whether to pay the electric bill, fill up their gas tank, or buy groceries for their families.

Or having to conserve energy when it's hot or cold outside...

...and it will ensure that people, not the government, are able to continue choosing the cars they drive or household appliance that work best for their lives...

As the nation's grid operators, our witnesses today face many challenges in making our complex electrical grid operate smoothly.

ISOs and RTOs have an important responsibility to homeowners, businesses, hospitals, and beyond to make sure our grid is reliable ...

I look forward to discussing how we can leverage a strong grid to boost the economy, raise the standard of living, and reduce emissions.

Thank you, and I yield back.