

Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Opening Statement – Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security:
“The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Power America’s Energy Future”
October 19, 2023
As prepared for delivery

Thank you, Chairman Duncan, and thank you to our witnesses.

This hearing is the second installment of our series on artificial intelligence and the importance of establishing a national privacy and data security standard...

...which is the best way to boost innovation and protect people’s information online as we incorporate more AI tools into our lives and businesses.

Today, we’ll explore the many advances in artificial intelligence applications and the opportunities AI can bring to our energy sector.

The Promise of American innovation and entrepreneurship has improved people’s lives and advanced our global economic leadership for decades.

America’s energy dominance has played a foundational role in helping us achieve those successes.

We’re blessed with an abundance of natural resources all around us.

From harnessing the power of clean nuclear and hydropower, to unlocking the shale revolution...

... we have led the world in countless advancements in the energy sector.

Today’s innovators are on the cutting edge of developing and deploying game-changing solutions that lower costs and shape the future for the next generation.

This is a uniquely American legacy, and it’s critical that we continue working to build on that legacy.

Which brings us to artificial intelligence.

As our energy infrastructure and equipment is increasingly automated and connected online...

... unlocking AI’s potential could radically enhance our ability to deliver affordable, reliable energy faster and more efficiently.

That includes tools to optimize energy exploration and grid operations, which will improve reliability, lower costs, and bolster U.S. leadership in reducing emissions.

AI can improve our prediction models for wildfires to significantly mitigate risks and reduce damage.

This technology can also help expand our energy supply by enhancing production of fossil energy, like natural gas and oil, while finding new ways to harness nuclear energy.

Across the board, AI can improve how we use our energy resources and mitigate risks for energy workers and the communities they serve.

We'll be able to produce more and use our abundant resources in more efficient, clean ways, which can help us drive down costs and achieve our common goal of being good stewards of the environment.

And the benefits of this technology become even greater over time.

Further down the road, machine learning, or “generative” AI systems, could open up new opportunities by enabling companies to perform even more complex data analysis, forecasting, and automation.

But like any new technology, with opportunities also come potential challenges.

As these increasingly powerful computing and information tools expand into critical sectors of our energy economy, we must confront the risks and potential for untended consequences of AI.

That includes accidents caused by automated decision-making and machinery, data privacy and copyright violations, and how these systems will respond to events like market disruptions.

Perhaps more concerning, as our energy systems become more complex and integrated, the risks for attacks by cybercriminals and other bad actors grow.

Because of the nature of these challenges, especially as it relates to the security of people's data, it's vital that America—not China—is the one leading the development and deployment of these AI tools.

We are at a pivotal moment in the development of AI.

Our competitors and adversaries, like China, are charging ahead to dominate it's use in energy and other sectors.

Many of these countries do not share America's values, like personal freedom and liberty, free markets, and human dignity for all.

As we explore the opportunities and risks of AI, we must strike the right balance.

One that keeps the U.S. in the lead by giving businesses the flexibility to remain agile as they develop these cutting-edge technologies...

...while at the same time ensuring the tools are used responsibly and the data that feeds these AI systems, especially people's personal data, is safe and secure.

This is the best way to set durable, informed policy that fosters American innovation and keeps the public's best interests front and center.

To reassert our global energy and innovation leadership for the coming century, we must win the race to harness the power of AI.

This is an exciting time!

I am optimistic that American innovators will answer the call and I encourage them to work with us.

Thank you, I yield back.