

Chair Jeff Duncan
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security: “Green Building Policies: Jeopardizing the American Dream of Homeownership”

May 22, 2024

As prepared for delivery

Good afternoon and welcome to today’s Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security hearing entitled “Green Building Policies: Jeopardizing the American Dream of Homeownership.”

Today, we are here to discuss the radical energy and building policies of the Biden administration. These policies are jeopardizing Americans’ ability to own homes, increasing energy costs, straining our electric grid, and putting our national security at risk.

For millions of Americans across the country, owning a home is part of the American dream. It’s a means to financial security.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration’s radical agenda is putting this further and further out of reach.

Building codes are adopted by state and local jurisdictions based on a variety of factors, such as climate and economic conditions.

The Biden administration has encouraged the adoption of these MODEL codes that seek to restrict the use of gas and promote electrification even if it is not cost effective or affordable.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provided for \$930 million in grants and funding for states that adopt the 2021 model energy code.

Many states have chosen not to adopt the most up to date codes due to the increase in housing costs.

For example, if my home state of South Carolina were to adopt the 2021 model code, the average cost of a new home would increase by up to \$31 thousand dollars with an energy “payback” time of 44 to 50 years.

This could price out almost 60,000 households that would have previously been able to afford an average home in my state.

This is not exclusive to South Carolina – families across the country are being priced out of new homes.

Advocates of these codes argue homebuyers will save money overtime but that really does not matter if people cannot even afford the home in the first place.

The Biden administration is also encouraging Americans to pay more for less through the Department of Energy's "[Zero Energy Ready Home Program.](#)"

The DOE's own website acknowledges that people cannot afford these new zero-energy homes and recommends that, as a way to offset the cost of the expensive zero energy features, Americans build smaller homes with less expensive finishes and furnishings to accommodate the cost of their policies.

Even worse, the administration is trying to incentivize these rush-to-green building policies by using our taxpayer dollars to sweeten the deal through a near billion-dollar IRA grant slush-fund.

The Biden administration is telling hardworking Americans to pay more for less -- to sacrifice quality and build smaller homes – and using taxpayers to foot the bill to enforce climate radicalism.

They're saying the quiet part out loud—they want to use other people's money to pay for the policies associated with their radical climate agenda.

The Biden administration's obsession with banning fossil fuels in buildings and houses is also contributing to this housing affordability crisis.

Energy is the foundation of everything in American life – when the cost of energy goes up so does everything else.

The Biden administration's anti-American energy policies are increasing the manufacturing and construction costs of residential homes and commercial properties – these costs are directly passed along to the consumer.

Natural gas allows us to heat our homes, keep the lights on, and get to our jobs. Despite the DOE's policies to force electrification, their own numbers show that homes with natural gas hookups are 3.4 times more affordable than electric.

This fossil fuel phase out goes further than residential homes.

DOE recently issued a rule to eliminate the use of natural gas in all new and modified federal buildings starting in 2030 – this includes military installations and housing, multi-family high rise residential buildings, and low-rise residential buildings.

In addition to compromising our military and national security, DOE's own data shows this rule actually will increase energy usage.

At a time where home prices are at an all time high and Americans are struggling to make ends meet, the Biden administration is making everyday life more expensive with its rush-to-green building policies.

I look forward to exploring this topic more today and thank you for being here.

I now recognize Ranking Member DeGette for five minutes.

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