Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Opening Statements—Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security: "Powering AI: Examining America's Energy and Technology Future"
June 4, 2024

As prepared for delivery

Good morning and thank you Chair Duncan.

For more than a century, American energy has powered our economy, raised our standard of living…

…and driven technological innovation that has improved the health and wellbeing of people across the country and around the world.

It has been key to American technological leadership thus far and will continue to be essential to ensuring we maintain that leadership in the future.

The data centers used to store and process the information that many of these emerging technologies utilize…

…along with the advanced manufacturing necessary to build them here at home, will require significantly more energy resources. Energy is foundational to everything we do.

The cornerstone of this foundation is affordable, reliable electricity.

The more electricity we have, the more we can accomplish and innovate as a nation.

This Congress, Energy and Commerce has held several hearings across our subcommittees exploring AI.

We've examined the benefits and uses, the safeguards necessary to protect Americans, especially their privacy, and the urgency for maintaining our global leadership.

We must meet the moment… our future prosperity and security depend on it.

If we fail, China will control our future... we cannot let that happen.
In order to beat China, we need to unleash American energy, not restrict it.

In states across the country, utility planners and regulators are confronting the hard truth that they need more reliable power to meet the needs of their communities and the growing demands from our digital economy.

Some are projecting a ten-fold increase in the growth rate of new power demand, compared with the past decade.

Just across the river in Northern Virginia, power demand is projected to increase from 2,500 megawatts in 2020 to over 8,000 megawatts by 2028.

In Georgia, utility companies had to quickly update their plans to reflect a jump from 400 megawatts of future demand to 6,600 megawatts.

To put that in perspective, Georgia would need about five more new Vogtle nuclear power plants to meet that level of demand.

Driving this demand, in many cases, are the industries that process digital information…

…the data centers that process cloud services, AI, and the digital transactions that are increasingly essential to modern life.

These services are critical to advancing our nation's prosperity and will need more, not less, reliable baseload power… the kind of power that can be generated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Even as we've seen spikes in demand across the country, the Biden administration has continued taking steps to shut down reliable baseload sources.

Recent EPA regulatory actions, like the Clean Power Plan 2.0, will accelerate the retirement of the very baseload generation essential for reliable power, or any meaningful economic growth.

Grid operators and others have been sounding the alarm for years, warning that the United States is on a dangerous and unsustainable path.

Time and again, grid experts have warned the committee that continuing this trend will mean higher prices for consumers and catastrophic blackouts.

Doubling down on anti-growth policies that restrict access to reliable energy sources and retire baseload power generation, is not how we secure our energy or technology future.
Energy is foundational to every aspect of our economy and our way of life.

We should be striving to assure our innovators can provide a more prosperous future for all Americans and help secure our energy and technological leadership for the next century.

That starts by ensuring states and regulators have the resources and infrastructure necessary to provide American families and businesses with reliable and affordable energy.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how we can achieve these goals.

Thank you and I yield back.