

Committee on Energy and Commerce

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

Hearing on “Powering America’s Future: Unleashing American Energy”

February 5, 2025

Committee Republicans want to talk about unleashing American energy at a time when President Trump is blatantly breaking the law – a law that is helping us unleash American energy and reduce energy costs for American families. On his first day in office, President Trump illegally froze billions of dollars in investments in the energy sector that were passed into law by Congress. That action was followed by a broader directive from the Office of Management and Budget that halted funding across the government, including Medicaid funding. Trump is stealing from the American people, but Congressional Republicans appear to have no problem with that – they’ve been virtually silent as Trump and his Administration continue to defy the law.

Fortunately, the courts have already ruled in favor of parties seeking to put a stop to this unconstitutional power grab. Today, I am sending letters with the subcommittee ranking members to the Department of Energy and other agencies within our Committee’s jurisdiction demanding that these congressionally approved funds be distributed immediately. We also want to know what funds are being sent out and what funds are still being illegally withheld.

While President Trump has a long history of stiffing contractors, particularly in my home state of New Jersey, but the American government must uphold its commitments. The chaotic rollout has left communities and organizations that are owed federal funding reeling. Workers and businesses are being harmed. Americans in need of care are being harmed. Congress and the American people deserve answers, and we’re going to fight to get them.

Unfortunately, as I said, House Republicans have been virtually silent. They, too, are dead set on eliminating these funds through the legislative process so they can pay for trillions of dollars in tax cuts for billionaires and big corporations.

House Republicans’ energy plans will increase costs for American families. Repealing the clean energy provisions in the law could result in a 10 percent jump for American families on their energy bills. Republicans ignore the fact that the Inflation Reduction Act is also growing our economy for the future and helping us combat the worsening climate crisis.

Frankly, it is difficult for me to comprehend how senseless the energy policies of the new Administration are. Trump declared a bogus “energy emergency,” yet on the very same day he illegally attempted to cut off federal support for nearly all energy investments in the United States. Republicans spent years saying that they supported an “all of the above” energy strategy, yet they are now trying to kill solar and wind – both onshore and offshore.

What is especially distressing is that the Republican Party is attempting to decimate a portion of our energy industry just when we most need it most. This Subcommittee heard repeatedly last Congress that after 20 years, demand for electricity in this country is starting to increase.

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To be clear, this is a good thing. It means artificial intelligence companies are choosing to build data centers in America. It means that manufacturing is making a major comeback in America after a generation of decline. And it means that more Americans are shifting towards cleaner ways of driving and heating and cooling their homes. All of these are promising trends that will benefit the country. But not if the power sector cannot meet the challenge.

Grid operators across the country are sounding the alarm, saying that they need every new electricity generator they can get to come online over the next five years – that we need to interconnect as many resources as we can as quickly as possible. Power generation projects take a long time to build in this country – and according to Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory, over 95 percent of the generation in the so-called interconnection queue is wind, solar, and batteries.

So if Republicans are really interested in “unleashing American energy,” they should work with us to clear interconnection queues, and let resources get on the grid as quickly as possible. We should work together to make sure that we have sufficient infrastructure – whether it’s transmission lines, transformers, circuit breakers, or other vital equipment – to make sure that we can hook those new sources of electricity up to the grid.

These are actions that we have to take. Our nation’s ability to compete in the 21st century depends on it. Unfortunately, it appears that Republicans are determined to once again do the bidding of their Big Oil and Gas friends. This is not progress, and Democrats will fight their partisan efforts every step of the way.

Finally, to all the career staff at the Department of Energy who are doing such hard work under challenging circumstances: please stay in your jobs. Americans need your expertise.

And with that, I yield back.