

Committee on Energy and Commerce

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

Hearing on “Assuring Abundant, Reliable American Energy to Power Innovation”

April 30, 2025

We’re now 100 days into the second disastrous Trump Administration, and the economy is reeling. Trump’s tariffs will cost Americans families nearly \$5,000 per year, and it was just announced the economy actually contracted last quarter. Yet Republicans in Congress just look the other way, instead focusing on moving legislation that will make America’s power grid dirtier, more expensive, and less reliable.

Five of the bills before us today are simple re-treads from H.R. 1, Republicans’ failed bill from last Congress that put polluters over people. These bills represent various handouts to Big Oil and Gas. They come at the expense of higher, more volatile energy prices for hardworking American families and more pollution in our communities.

Some bills that were not included in H.R. 1 contain proposals that would let gas generators jump ahead in the interconnection queue or would stick Americans with the costs of uneconomic coal plants, regardless of whether those plants are actually needed for reliability. I think these bills have serious flaws, and I look forward to hearing more about them today.

I want to once again note that my constituents in New Jersey are facing a triple-digit annual increase in their power prices. Just yesterday, I sent a letter to the Chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, backing up a request from New Jersey Governor Murphy that FERC investigate the most recent capacity auction that is at the root of New Jersey’s price increases.

The price increases facing New Jerseyans are due to the incompetence of PJM, the region’s grid operator. PJM has simply been too slow to hook up new energy to the grid. Once PJM has installed its new leadership, it needs to explicitly focus on getting as much power onto its grid as quickly as possible.

That brings me to Ranking Member Castor’s Expediting Generator Interconnection Procedures Act, which would have FERC push beyond the interconnection reforms it made two years ago. The bill would address quicker and innovative ways to study grid impacts, and allow generators flexibility in the type of grid connection they want to receive. In short, the bill would allow more power to connect to the grid faster, which is what we have heard stakeholders demand in four hearings just this year. I certainly hope we can continue to move forward with this bill.

I think it’s ridiculous that Republicans are trying to grant additional authorities to FERC when the Trump Administration unleashed an unprecedented attack on the commission last week by forcing out Commissioner Willie Phillips. Just last month, we heard every single grid operator plead with us to make FERC less politicized and maintain its independence of the President. I guess Republicans think that Donald Trump knows better than our nation’s grid operators about how to make a reliable power grid.

I am also deeply disappointed that Republicans are leading off this Congress with tired reruns of ideas that in some cases they’ve been trying to pass for a decade. All year, we have heard numerous

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energy industry leaders beg us to take a radically different view of the power grid in light of the coming power demand. We must get resources hooked up to the grid as fast as possible, and we must build out and enhance our grid so it can deal with the increased demand for electricity that we know is coming.

This Subcommittee has held multiple hearings this year where we've heard testimony saying that we can't afford to disincentivize energy development in the tax code. That we can't gut the offices at the Department of Energy that are responsible for enhancing our grid, offering financing to energy projects like the restart of the Palisades nuclear plant, and ensuring that our energy supply chains are stable. And yet, Republicans and the Trump Administration are doing all of those things, despite warnings that those actions would be catastrophic from their own witnesses at hearings they set up.

If Republicans cared about meeting load growth and competing with China, they should be fighting to strengthen the Department of Energy, restore vital federal funding to enhance our nation's grid, and ensure that our tax code encourages building out power generation.

If Republicans are serious about dealing with the challenges of a 21st century grid, they need to be prepared to discuss 21st century solutions, not just double down on trying to drag us back to a power grid from the 1920s.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.