

**Chairman Robert Latta**  
**Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy**  
**“Protecting America’s Energy Infrastructure in Today’s Cyber and Physical Threat**  
**Landscape”**  
**January 13, 2026**  
*As prepared for delivery*

Welcome to today’s hearing and thank you to the witnesses for appearing before us to inform our legislative efforts to secure and strengthen the nation’s energy systems.

The reliable delivery of energy through our critical infrastructure is foundational to the modern economy and the health and welfare of all our communities.

At a time of tremendous growth in our nation’s energy demands, the need for effective security cannot be overstated.

During our recent hearing examining cyber and physical threats, we heard directly from operators and experts about the capabilities of adversaries and the work to safeguard against efforts to exploit vulnerabilities to disrupt the everyday lives of hardworking Americans.

Addressing cyber and physical threats is no easy task.

The avenues for malicious activity only widen as digitization, communications, and linkages of gas pipelines, new generating resources, and transmission take root to meet energy demands.

The interconnected nature of our energy systems requires constant intelligence sharing, clear visibility into threat landscapes, and sufficient resources to fill gaps in security protections for rural and small utility service territories.

That is exactly what the legislation before us seeks to accomplish.

Importantly, the Energy Emergency Leadership Act strengthens the Department of Energy’s central energy sector security mission.

It does so by requiring that its well-established energy emergency and cyber functions are led by an Assistant Secretary, confirmed by the Senate.

This will ensure the Department has the focused and accountable leadership to more fully protect the public from fuel and electricity supply disruptions, including emerging threats from our foreign adversaries to the nation’s electric grid.

As the Sector Risk Management Agency for the energy sector, DOE requires visibility over the whole system and actively collaborates not only with the power sector, but also the oil and gas sector to prepare and respond appropriately to emergencies. DOE's central role in Federal coordination and providing technical assistance as needed is critical for a secure energy system.

The Pipeline Cybersecurity Preparedness Act will enhance and formalize DOE's work in this area, so we have a stronger, more resilient energy sector.

Alongside this bill, the Energy Threat Analysis Center Act would formally authorize a valuable program that improves information sharing and coordination on threat analyses.

The Energy Threat Analysis Center, or ETAC, brings together key public and private partners, including the intelligence community, to address vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure and provide operational support for energy sector resilience.

The Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act will improve cybersecurity protocols and equipment for small utilities, electric co-operatives, and public power agencies by providing targeted funding and technical assistance.

These small entities typically serve our most rural and remote communities that do not have the same resources as their larger investor-owned counterparts.

States too play an essential role in protecting energy infrastructure within their borders.

Last Congress, this committee held a field hearing in North Carolina to examine the attack on a substation in Moore County that left 30,000 people without power.

The SECURE Grid Act, which I plan to sponsor with my colleague from California's 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional district, builds upon the existing State Energy Security Plan framework to expand the visibility of potential threats to local distribution and supply chain networks.

Altogether, this package of security bills comes at a critical time.

Our adversaries remain close on our heels to overtake the United States as the leading technological superpower on the world stage.

Our communities cannot afford to endure disruptive large-scale attacks that can be prevented with commonsense solutions and collaboration.

The bills before us today present a bipartisan opportunity to secure our nation's energy system so we can fuel economic growth in job creating industries across the country.

Today we'll hear from the Department of Energy, which has been helpful providing technical assistance to our bi-partisan work today.

Alex Fitzsimmons, Acting Undersecretary of Energy, can provide a broad view of DOE's important energy sector work and how this legislation may advance that work.

Our second panel of witnesses will also inform our work from their perspectives on the front lines of cyber and physical threat protection.

I look forward to the discussion today and yield back the balance of my time.