

Committee on Energy and Commerce

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

Hearing on “The Fiscal Year 2027 Department of Energy Budget”

April 16, 2026

The Trump Administration’s energy policy, Secretary Wright, has been an absolute failure. Energy prices of all kinds have skyrocketed. Energy reliability is under threat. Pollution is getting worse for the first time in decades. And, Mr. Secretary, it is all the Trump Administration’s fault.

The list of disastrous policy failures from this Administration is long, but one of the worst offenses has been Trump’s reckless war in Iran. Since day one, there has been no plan. In fact, the strategy changes by the day, and by each deranged social media post from Trump. First Trump says he wants to open the Strait of Hormuz, then the next day he says he wants to blockade it. His erratic policies have sent global oil prices skyrocketing, and American drivers are now paying more than \$4 per gallon each time they fill up their tanks, while diesel prices have reached over \$5 per gallon. Trump’s war caused the largest monthly increase in gas prices in nearly 60 years, and there’s no relief in sight. The average household is expected to spend \$740 extra on gas this year.

Making matters worse, the Trump Administration’s initial response was to unleash sanctioned Russian and Iranian crude upon the world, rewarding two of the worst actors on the international stage, including the one the Administration is actively fighting a war against. Even in the last week, Trump has floated a plan that would allow Iran to collect billions of dollars in tolls for oil traversing the Strait of Hormuz. President Trump started this war promising that the Iranian regime would fall, but clearly, that’s not happening. This war is an unequivocal disaster brought on by the president.

And throughout all this chaos and volatility in markets, Secretary Wright, your social media account was saying the United States was escorting ships through the Strait of Hormuz, but the White House said it wasn’t true. And you seemed more interested in increasing the output of Venezuelan oil producers than addressing energy security challenges here in the United States. The Trump Administration’s energy policy has firmly put America Last. So much for the promises of America First.

And it hasn’t just been foreign policy. Republicans’ disastrous domestic energy policies have put America Last too. Electricity prices have increased at twice the pace of inflation, and natural gas prices are up 12 percent since Trump took office. Last month, energy prices caused inflation to reach its highest level in two years. Tens of millions of Americans are already struggling to afford their power bills, and last year utilities requested \$31 billion in rate hikes.

Rather than trying to soften the blow for Americans, the Department of Energy, under your leadership, has only made things worse. DOE has attacked energy efficiency standards, cancelled or delayed clean energy projects, and slowed down important cost-saving programs like the Home Rebates program and the Weatherization Assistance Program.

Just 36 hours ago, my staff received a 40-page list of grants that DOE has decided to retain or modify, after leaving these grantees hanging for over 15 months. These are projects that would strengthen the grid, build out clean energy manufacturing, and reduce our reliance on foreign supply chains. But many had not heard a word from DOE for over a year, and this period of limbo has seriously jeopardized the viability of many of these projects. You can't rob a bank, then give 90 percent of the money back and expect a thank-you. There isn't going to be any thank-you from me.

Making matters worse, your Administration has directly increased electricity prices by hundreds of millions of dollars in certain regions of the country to keep coal plants online. Unfortunately, as a report last week showed, three of those plants you demanded stay online didn't produce a single megawatt of power. And yet American families in those areas are seeing their electricity prices shoot through the roof. It's the perfect summary of the Trump Administration: policies with high costs and zero benefits.

Secretary Wright, during your time at the Department of Energy, there has been a drastic and unprecedented decline in energy security and affordability for all Americans. Today's hearing is about ensuring you are held accountable for what's happening on your watch – and not continuing the steep price increases that American families are facing every day.

Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.