

**Chairman Brett Guthrie Opening Statement
As Prepared for Delivery
Subcommittee on Energy
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
“Wires, Rates, and States: Permitting Transmission for
Affordable Reliable Power.”
Wednesday, May 13, 2026**

The American electric system is one of the most complex machines ever constructed.

It delivers 4.4 trillion kilowatt-hours of power year-around, 24 hours a day/7 days a week, to our homes and businesses.

This requires a system with 1,200 gigawatts of generation, 3,000 utilities, 640,000 miles of high voltage lines, and many millions more miles of distribution lines connecting to meters.

With a few exceptions, amazingly this engineering marvel was permitted and built under the jurisdiction of state regulators, not the federal government.

While the Federal Power Act establishes FERC as a *rate regulator* that oversees transmission and wholesale rates in interstate commerce, decisions about physical electric infrastructure are a state responsibility under federal law.

Today’s hearing will examine the longstanding role of states in the permitting process and how best to ensure

transmission permitting and construction is efficient and predictable, and provides for affordable, reliable power.

Testimony from utilities, grid operators, and state regulators before the Committee this Congress has repeatedly underscored the critical role of bottom up, integrated planning—which accounts for both generation and transmission—when deciding what and where to build.

As a practical matter, this enables consideration of what works best for communities and states and what is most affordable for ratepayers in those areas.

Yet, the Environmental Left is seeking to impose their agenda into electricity policy, having tried continually to replace bottom-up integrated planning and state authorities with more federal control over what and where generation and transmission should be built.

The Waxman Markey Cap and Trade bill sought to do this in 2009.

After Congress rejected that, the Obama EPA attempted to dictate state electric generation planning through the Clean Power Plan, while a Democrat-controlled FERC pushed regional planning for renewable energy under Order 1000.

The Biden-Harris Administration doubled down, with EPA issuing radical rules that would have effectively eliminated electric generation from fossil fuels. Simultaneously, FERC issued Order 1920 to make it easier to socialize the costs of transmission for renewable energy, thereby undermining state planning.

To meet their vision of a fossil-free electric grid, the Left is pushing top-down, transmission-focused planning *regardless* of whether states may have a better way to build infrastructure and keep costs down for ratepayers.

We're going to need more transmission. But we must build it in a way that works for ratepayers.

This hearing will help us examine how best to do this. I yield back.

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