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6 MARKUP OF:

7 H.R. 9332, LOAD FORECASTING ENHANCEMENT ACT;

8 H.R. 9339, AFFORDABLE INNOVATION FOR THE GRID ACT;

9 H.R. 9335, ADVANCED TRANSMISSION TO REDUCE RATES ACT;

10 H.R. 9340, RATEPAYER PROTECTION ACT;

11 H.R. 6633, HIGH-CAPACITY GRID ACT;

12 H.R. 6529, PROTECTING FAMILIES FROM AI DATA CENTER ENERGY

13 COSTS ACT;

14 H.R. 2986, EXPEDITING GENERATOR INTERCONNECTION PROCEDURES

15 ACT OF 2025; AND

16 H.R. 9338, PIPELINE SAFETY AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2026

17 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026

18 House of Representatives,

19 Subcommittee on Energy,

20 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

21 Washington, D.C.

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25 The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:02 p.m. in

26 Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Robert E.

27 Latta [chairman of the subcommittee], presiding.

28 Present: Representatives Latta, Weber, Palmer, Allen,
29 Balderson, Pfluger, Harshbarger, Miller-Meeks, Bentz, Fry,
30 Lee, Langworthy, Rulli, Evans, Goldman, Fedorchak, Guthrie
31 (ex officio); Castor, Peters, Menendez, Mullin, McClellan,
32 DeGette, Matsui, Tonko, Veasey, Schrier, Fletcher, Ocasio-
33 Cortez, Auchincloss, and Pallone (ex officio).

34 Staff Present: Ansley Boylan, Director of Operations;
35 Jessica Donlon, General Counsel; Michael Essington, Chief
36 Counsel; Andrea Furman, Professional Staff Member; Sydney
37 Greene, Director of Finance and Logistics; Calvin Huggins,
38 Clerk; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Olivia Jensen, Staff
39 Assistant; Noah Jackson, Clerk; AT Johnson, Special Advisor;
40 Brayden Lacefield, Special Assistant; Mary Martin, Chief
41 Counsel; Joel Miller, Chief Counsel; Ben Mullaney, Press
42 Secretary; Ryan Murphy, Director of Member Services; Lillian
43 Noland, Clerk; Brice Ogle, Special Assistant; Claire Richey,
44 Clerk; Seth Ricketts, Clerk; Jackson Rudden, Clerk; Chris
45 Sarley, Member Services/Stakeholder Director; Timothy
46 Trimble, Staff Assistant; Matt VanHyfte, Communications
47 Director; Jordan Antwi, Minority Intern; Waverly Gordon,
48 Minority Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; Tiffany
49 Guarascio, Minority Staff Director; Perry Hamilton, Minority
50 Deputy Director, Member Services, and Outreach; Alyssa
51 Kimura, Minority Intern; Serena Klebba, Minority Staff
52 Assistant; Brendan Lopez, Minority Press Assistant;

53 Kristopher Pittard, Minority Professional Staff Member; Emma
54 Roehrig, Minority Staff Assistant; Kylea Rogers, Minority
55 Policy Analyst; Andrew Souvall, Minority Director of
56 Communications, Outreach, and Member Services; Medha
57 Surampudy, Minority Professional Staff Member; Hannah Treger,
58 Minority Staff Assistant; and Tuley Wright, Minority Staff
59 Director.

60

61 *Mr. Latta. The subcommittee will come to order. The
62 chair recognizes himself for an opening statement.

63 Welcome to today's subcommittee markup to consider eight
64 bills to lower costs for households and promote innovation in
65 our electric sector while ensuring the United States remains
66 in position to win the race with communist China for AI
67 development.

68 The legislation before our subcommittee is the
69 culmination of extensive regular order process to ensure
70 sufficient public input and technical assistance.

71 Throughout this Congress witnesses before our
72 subcommittee have made things crystal clear: our nation is
73 in the midst of -- concerning a reliability crisis;
74 affordability challenges are straining household budgets; and
75 the electric sector must meet the moment to ensure our
76 country can compete and win in the next generation economy.
77 These pillars have been our North Star. Today we are taking
78 action to improve the daily lives of everyday American
79 families.

80 Importantly, H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection Act,
81 introduced by my colleague from Colorado's 8th congressional
82 district, seeks to ensure that costs associated with rapid
83 load growth are not placed on the backs of captive
84 ratepayers. This concept is simple: hard-working American
85 households should not foot the bill for the costs that are

86 caused by the growing electricity demands from large energy
87 users. Using a light-touch target and forward-looking
88 approach, H.R. 9340 provides direction to state utility
89 commissions to establish large-load tariffs that can
90 methodically fuel investment into job-creating industries
91 while protecting households from picking up the tab.

92 Our electric grid needs additional capacity and fast,
93 yet transmission costs have increased dramatically in the
94 21st century while fuel and generation costs have plummeted.
95 The cheapest transmission line is one that you don't have to
96 build. H.R. 6633, the High-Capacity Grid Act, sponsored by
97 our colleague from North Dakota's at-large congressional
98 district, will enhance our bulk power system with advanced
99 conductors that have a higher carrying capacity.

100 To usher in a modernized electric system, H.R. 9335, the
101 Advanced Transmission to Reduce Rates Act [sic], sponsored by
102 our colleague from Texas's 12th district, will bolster
103 important work of the Department of Energy to develop
104 innovative grid solutions and make it easier for utilities to
105 deploy these technologies.

106 Alongside these efforts, H.R. 9332, the Load Forecasting
107 Enhancement Act introduced by our colleague from Ohio's 12th
108 district, will foster important Federal and state
109 collaboration to improve accuracy of demand projections that
110 will lead to more cost-effective infrastructure build-out.

111 It is important to address what impacts AI has on the
112 grid, but equally important to consider how AI can be used to
113 improve the grid. H.R. 9339 the Affordable Innovation for
114 Grid Act, sponsored by our colleague from Tennessee's 1st
115 district, leverages the expertise of DoE to study the
116 different ways innovative computational models can improve
117 efficiencies in our system.

118 We will also consider H.R. 6529, the Protecting Families
119 from AI Data Center Energy Costs Act, and I thank our
120 colleague from Ohio's 1st district for agreeing to changes
121 that respect the critical roles of states in addressing
122 retail rates of electric service.

123 Also under consideration is H.R. 9338, the Pipeline
124 Safety Authorization Act, which reauthorizes PHMSA's pipeline
125 safety program for five years. This streamlined bill will
126 enable PHMSA to refocus on safety as its essential mission,
127 while making common-sense changes to ensure PHMSA can
128 regulate efficiency while maintaining and improving safety.
129 This bill is a product of bipartisan work that is still
130 ongoing, and I look forward to continuing to work with our
131 colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find a bipartisan
132 path forward to ensure the safe development and oversight of
133 our pipeline infrastructure.

134 Lastly, I would like to thank our colleague and ranking
135 member from Florida's 14th district on our continued work to

136 refine H.R. 2986, the Expediting Generator Interconnection
137 Procedures Act, to ensure that provisions of the bill
138 addresses current challenges facing the interconnection
139 process and provide discretion to regions based on their
140 unique differences. While improvements are necessary for the
141 bill, I commit to working with our colleague, the ranking
142 member, and also to work in good faith and hopefully find
143 that common ground.

144 All together, this timely subcommittee markup takes
145 another step to affirming American energy dominance for the
146 benefit of all of our constituents.

147 And with that I yield back and I now recognize the
148 gentlelady from Florida's 14th district, the ranking member
149 of the subcommittee, for five minutes for an opening
150 statement.

151 *Ms. Castor. Well, thank you, Chairman Latta and
152 colleagues. We are really looking forward to today's markup
153 today. We have a lot of work to do, especially since
154 household electric bills have risen 18 percent in the United
155 States since 2025 and the war in Iran has inflicted
156 additional economic pain on our neighbors back home.
157 GasBuddy said yesterday that gas prices in Florida alone are
158 averaging 300 -- or \$3.89, nearly a dollar higher than before
159 the war started.

160 So it is clear that we have got to work together to

161 lower energy costs, and that is why it is -- people are
162 pained, though, by the waste of time and money in watching
163 the Administration kill off energy projects, paying companies
164 \$2.5 billion to abandon their offshore wind projects -- many
165 of them were already under construction -- spending 700
166 million of taxpayer money to prop up dying coal plants. In
167 this affordability squeeze it makes no sense for the
168 President to cancel energy projects, but he has done so for
169 382 energy projects.

170 So it is hopeful, in any event, to -- that this
171 committee can begin work on real solutions. For example, our
172 bipartisan proposal to protect working families from the cost
173 of AI data center energy infrastructure, the Ratepayer
174 Protection Act, is a step in the right direction.

175 Last week FERC also recognized the importance of
176 protecting ratepayers as they ordered regional grid operators
177 that are connecting large energy users to adopt -- they
178 adopted a unanimous bipartisan agreement to protect consumers
179 while delivering transparency, reliability, and innovation.
180 However, it is important to remember that FERC's actions will
181 not help one-third of the American population who live
182 outside of an electricity market. So we need to make sure
183 that all of the nation's grid operating -- operators are
184 playing by their rules, not just some of them.

185 FERC also outlined a number of solutions: grid-

186 enhancing technologies which allow us to get more out of the
187 existing grid that we have already paid for; advanced load
188 flexibility which can limit the need for grid upgrades and
189 reduce power bills for everybody; and smarter planning,
190 reducing project speculation and improving grid studies. And
191 now it is Congress's turn to build on that work.

192 I appreciate the inclusion of my Expediting Generator
193 Interconnection Procedures Act in today's markup, and I
194 appreciate your remarks, Mr. Chairman, at the outset. I know
195 we can work together in a bipartisan way to move it forward
196 to the full committee.

197 And we really cannot afford to wait. We need
198 congressional action in this committee to make the targeted
199 policy reforms now on how we plan, permit, and pay for
200 transmission that can unlock energy growth that our country
201 needs. We need to do more to measure and increase grid
202 utilization which could save Americans up to \$100 billion
203 over the next decade. We need to help deploy virtual power
204 plants, leveraging the innovative new technologies like smart
205 thermostats and batteries already in communities across the
206 country to provide grid reliability faster and at lower cost.
207 We need to do more to ensure tech companies meet their
208 promises to not only pay for energy infrastructure, but also
209 power their data centers with cleaner, cheaper energy and
210 battery storage.

211 Today's hearing also includes a long-overdue
212 reauthorization of our pipeline safety program. While the
213 bill is still incomplete, I appreciate that my Republican
214 colleagues are working with us, and hope that we can come to
215 a bipartisan agreement that protects the American people, not
216 just oil and gas special interests.

217 Let me be clear. The bills we are discussing today will
218 not address all of the challenges facing the high cost of
219 energy and the need to upgrade our grid, but they take an
220 important step in the right direction. I hope we can all
221 continue to work together to deliver clean, reliable energy
222 that can power the 21st century economy and lower costs for
223 all Americans.

224 Thank you and I yield back.

225 *Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentlelady yields
226 back the balance of her time. The chair now recognizes the
227 gentleman from Kentucky, the chairman of the full committee,
228 for five minutes for an opening statement.

229 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
230 appreciate you having this markup today, the consideration
231 today.

232 The subcommittee will consider eight bills to protect
233 electric ratepayers from unnecessary cost, increase grid
234 capacity, and improve pipeline safety. The bills reflect a
235 significant amount of bipartisan work that take a practical

236 step to address some of the most pressing energy and power
237 issues of the day. These issues concern the cost for our
238 power system to reliably meet growing power demand and what
239 is needed to protect ratepayers from unprecedented spending
240 to meet that demand. We also take up reauthorizing PHMSA to
241 ensure a safe and affordable supply of oil and gas for
242 businesses and households.

243 Throughout this Congress the Energy Subcommittee has
244 developed a large hearing record on various forces that will
245 affect the future of our energy system. For the power sector
246 we have heard from more than 40 expert witnesses representing
247 all aspects of the industry, from small utilities to major
248 grid operators, to state and Federal regulators. We have
249 examined reliability, the challenges, benefits, and vital
250 importance of data centers and what is needed to build the
251 power generation and grid we need for the future, and to do
252 so quickly.

253 These are complex challenges that frustrate simple or
254 one-size-fits-all solutions, especially when it comes to the
255 various ways states and communities are responding to energy
256 and power needs. Even at the Federal regulatory level, one-
257 size-fits-all power sector policy may not be appropriate.
258 Just this past week, rather than issue a sweeping regulatory
259 proposal for connecting large data centers to transmission
260 systems, FERC chose to assess different regions on their own

261 terms, recognizing that what works in the Midwest may not
262 work in New England. Regional and state approaches matter,
263 and we should not forget that. This is why policies that
264 support the sharing of technical information to encourage
265 best practices make sense, whether it is the grid or pipeline
266 safety.

267 It also makes sense to set general frameworks that
268 states may then adjust to meet the needs of their
269 communities. This is what several bills do today.

270 We are on a good track, thanks to your work, Chairman
271 Latta, and thank you to the members on both sides of the
272 aisle and the Ranking Member Castor. We appreciate the
273 willingness to work together. We are committed to doing so.

274 And I yield back.

275 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back and
276 the chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, the
277 ranking member of the full committee, for five minutes for an
278 opening statement.

279 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Chairman Latta.

280 Most of the bills on today's agenda are framed around
281 trying to minimize the impact of data centers on our nation's
282 power grid. And I think, in general, these bills are a
283 useful first step. But compared to the challenges the
284 American power grid is facing, they are not nearly enough.
285 Energy consumption from data centers doubled between 2017 and

286 2013. That is a six-year period, and that is just the
287 beginning if big tech gets its way.

288 Last week Berkeley Lab put out a report claiming that
289 data centers may be responsible for over 15 percent of our
290 nation's total electricity use by 2030, just four years from
291 now. The North Atlantic Electric Reliability Corporation put
292 out its most severe warning last month, saying that data
293 centers cause significant risks to the reliability of our
294 power grid.

295 And these data centers consume a lot of electricity,
296 driving up monthly energy costs for hard-working American
297 families. Across the country electricity prices are 18
298 percent higher than they were when President Trump was
299 inaugurated. Promises by the data center industry and big
300 tech that these facilities will bring down costs have fallen
301 flat. Instead, the grid operator for the Mid-Atlantic region
302 estimated that ratepayers, including families in New Jersey,
303 paid over \$9 billion last year for the electricity that data
304 centers and big tech need to fuel their AI demands.

305 And then there are the environmental impacts. We are
306 seeing data centers running on dirty diesel generators that
307 drive up pollution while the Trump Administration runs
308 roughshod over the Clean Air Act's critical community
309 protections to shield Elon Musk from accountability. There
310 are reports of data centers being approved without any

311 analysis of their water use, even in water-stressed
312 communities. Those living and working near data centers
313 complain of chronic noise pollution and increased light
314 pollution, and the EPA is even trying to fast-track the
315 approval of chemicals like new PFAS for use in data centers,
316 putting the health of Americans across the nation at risk.

317 So, Mr. Chairman, this simply cannot continue, and that
318 is why I am in favor of a national AI data center moratorium
319 until we can find a way to ensure they don't harm our
320 nation's air, water, and power bills. Towns in my district
321 are way ahead of this Congress in seeking a moratorium.
322 Asbury Park, Red Bank, Old Bridge, and Sayreville all have
323 taken this bold step. The City of New Brunswick put a stop
324 on a data center plan after the community stood together to
325 oppose the project. And we need follow in their footsteps
326 here in Congress.

327 Americans across the country have expressed concern and
328 opposition to the rampant construction of AI data centers,
329 and Congress should take this political groundswell seriously
330 with a data center moratorium. That is what we need. Even
331 President Trump has realized he has a data center popularity
332 problem. But instead of trying to drive real change, Trump
333 asked big tech to sign a so-called ratepayer protection
334 pledge with no enforcement. At a time when Americans are
335 seeing their bills skyrocket, we need action not toothless

336 promises from big tech.

337 Last week's action by FERC to craft rules of the road
338 may have some promise, but it is going to take months, if not
339 years, to come to fruition, and Americans need help now, not
340 in two years.

341 Democrats have been clear. Families around the country
342 should not see their power bills rise by a single cent
343 because of data centers. Real families are suffering real
344 harm because the pace of this build-out. Unfortunately, I
345 don't think Republicans believe that. Just a few weeks ago
346 committee Republicans initiated an investigation, insisting
347 that China is somehow the reason that Americans oppose an
348 unlimited build-out of data centers. Well, that is not the
349 case. In fact, when I go home in New Jersey I talk to
350 constituents who are concerned about data centers. These are
351 real people with real worries, not paid Chinese actors or
352 people unwittingly tricked by the Chinese Communist Party.
353 It is simply not true. The committee has to take more
354 aggressive action to ensure that data center developers are
355 held accountable and that consumers aren't left holding the
356 bill.

357 And finally, I want to address pipeline safety. I have
358 to -- I will say more about it when we get to that in the
359 markup, Mr. Chairman, but I do want to thank Chairmen Guthrie
360 and Latta and their staff for working together constructively

361 to find a bipartisan path forward. We are not quite there
362 yet, but we have momentum and I am confident that we can
363 eventually craft a product all of us can support with regard
364 to the pipeline safety bill.

365 And so thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the
366 balance of my time.

367 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much. The gentleman
368 yields back the balance of his time, and the chair reminds
369 members that, pursuant to committee rules, all members'
370 opening statements will be made part of the record.

371 Are there any further opening statements?

372 Hearing none, the chair calls up H.R. 9332, and asks the
373 clerk to report.

374 *The Clerk. H.R. 9332, a bill to require the Federal
375 Energy Regulatory Commission --

376 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
377 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
378 amendment at any point.

379 So ordered.

380 [The bill follows:]

381

382 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

383

384 *Mr. Latta. Does any member seek to be recognized on
385 the bill?

386 For what purpose does the gentleman from Ohio's 12th
387 district seek recognition?

388 *Mr. Balderson. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last
389 word.

390 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized to -- for five
391 minutes to speak on the bill.

392 *Mr. Balderson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you
393 for holding this markup today including my bill, H.R. 9332,
394 the Load Forecasting Enhancement Act.

395 I would also like to thank my colleague from New Jersey,
396 Congressman Menendez, for working with me on this legislation
397 and co-leading the bill with me.

398 Our electric grid has entered a period of unprecedented
399 change. Advanced manufacturing, increased electrification,
400 and the surge of AI data centers have created a historic
401 increase in electricity demand. We have seen this firsthand
402 in Ohio's 12th congressional district, which has 41 data
403 centers in operation or being built, the most in the States.
404 My constituents are seeing these data centers being built in
405 their neighborhoods, and are rightfully concerned about what
406 this rapid growth means for their families and their
407 communities.

408 Congress must do more to help get new generation built

409 quickly to power this growth and ensure large loads
410 customers, and not our constituents, are the ones paying for
411 these upgrades and new cost. At the very least, we can
412 ensure that grid operators, states, utilities, and power
413 providers are accurately planning for this growth to keep the
414 grid reliable and protecting our constituents.

415 This bill is a great step to ensuring states and
416 utilities are using the best tools available to measure the
417 load growth so that they can appropriately plan for the new
418 generation and transmission. Accurate load forecasting
419 prevents the under-building of electric infrastructure and
420 generation that is critical to maintaining grid reliability.
421 And just as importantly, this bill will help prevent the
422 over-building of unnecessary electric infrastructure for
423 speculative projects that can end up hurting ratepayers.

424 The Load Forecasting Enhancement Act establishes
425 regional joint boards to bring state utility regulators and
426 FERC commissioners together to examine, identify, and report
427 to Congress the best practices that improve the accuracy,
428 transparency, and accountability of projects of new electric
429 load. The bill amends the Public Utility Regulatory Policies
430 Act to require each state to consider incorporating the
431 recommendations that lead to better load forecasting. Just
432 this week one of the Department of Energy's National Labs
433 released a report showing data centers could double their

434 share of U.S. power and account for 10 to 15 percent of our
435 electricity use by 2030.

436 Given this uncertainty with projected demand, utilities
437 and states need better tools to distinguish between
438 speculative demand projects, projections, and projects that
439 have demonstrated a genuine commitment to move forward.
440 Better forecasting means better planning, and better planning
441 means a more reliable grid and more responsive investment
442 decisions. I urge my colleagues on the subcommittee to
443 support this bill.

444 And I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

445 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much. The gentleman
446 yields back and the chair recognizes -- for what purpose does
447 the gentleman from -- wish to be recognized?

448 *Mr. Menendez. I move to strike the last word and speak
449 in support of the bill.

450 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman from New Jersey's 8th
451 district is recognized for five minutes to strike the last
452 word.

453 *Mr. Menendez. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am glad the
454 committee is holding today's markup to consider bills that
455 are a vital first step toward addressing challenges to our
456 grid brought on by the growth of AI data centers, and I am
457 proud to partner with Congressman Balderson on H.R. 9332, the
458 Load Forecasting Enhancement Act.

459 Load forecasting is a key piece to ensuring there is
460 enough energy supply to meet our future energy demands, and
461 would help utilities and states with their long-term
462 planning. This bill would push state utility commissions and
463 investor-owned utilities to adopt best practices when
464 forecasting demand, including large loads such as AI data
465 centers, and in turn make sure that we have an accurate idea
466 of how much energy we will need years down the line.
467 Accurate data and better load forecasting practices will help
468 us make sure that the planning we are doing today matches the
469 demands of tomorrow. Improving load forecasting will help
470 prevent blackouts and brownouts, and make sure our
471 constituents don't experience sudden and avoidable spikes to
472 their energy bills.

473 So while I am happy to see the committee taking steps in
474 the right direction, I want to acknowledge that we should be
475 using every tool in the toolbox to protect Americans from
476 blackouts and rising energy costs, and we also need to make
477 sure that tech companies that are developing AI data centers
478 are held accountable for the economic, environmental, and
479 health impacts they have on our communities.

480 One way that we can do this is by having more
481 transparency into data centers' energy use and the impact
482 they have on the water we drink and the air we breathe. My
483 bill, the Data Center Transparency Act, would shed light on

484 these factors.

485 So today's markup is a step in the right direction. I
486 am proud to work on bipartisan legislation to address these
487 pressing needs. I encourage my colleagues to continue this
488 work and vote in support of this bill.

489 I yield back.

490 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the
491 balance of his time. Is there any further discussion on the
492 bill?

493 For what purpose does the gentleman from New York's 20th
494 district seek recognition?

495 *Mr. Tonko. Mr. Chair, I move to strike the last word.

496 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
497 minutes --

498 *Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

499 *Mr. Latta. -- to speak on the bill.

500 *Mr. Tonko. I appreciate the committee's recognition
501 that we are experiencing significant but uncertain
502 electricity demand growth. Current load forecasting methods
503 lack transparency and can vary significantly across regions
504 and utilities. This bill takes a good step towards
505 addressing these challenges. Regional coordination to
506 harmonize best methods and a consistent framework for
507 forecasting large, fast-moving, and uncertain loads is a
508 critical step to meeting this new demand in ways that

509 maintain affordability and reliability for all ratepayers.

510 But I want to again express my view that DoE can and
511 should also play an important role. I don't think I am alone
512 in this view. At our budget hearing earlier this year
513 Secretary Wright agreed that DoE's role in load forecasting
514 is a major focus of this Administration. DoE has tremendous
515 analytical and modeling capabilities and to more -- to
516 provide technical assistance to grid operators, to the
517 states, and utilities better -- as they better plan for
518 increasing energy demand. This includes utilities such as
519 public power entities and rural co-ops that may be
520 responsible for load forecasting but do not typically work
521 with FERC. Technical assistance from DoE National labs can
522 go a long way in helping smaller co-ops and municipal
523 utilities that may not have the capacity or capability to
524 model load growth at the scale that larger utilities can.

525 Mr. Chair, I hope you and Ranking Member Pallone would
526 be open to working with me as this bill moves to a full
527 committee markup to ensure that we are explicitly recognizing
528 the complementary capabilities of DoE and authorizing DoE's
529 ability to provide technical assistance to support these load
530 forecasting efforts.

531 With that, Mr. Chair, I yield back and thank you.

532 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much. The gentleman
533 yields back the balance of his time.

534 Are there any other members wishing to speak on the
535 bill?

536 Hearing none, are there any amendments on the bill?

537 Seeing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.
538 9332.

539 All those in favor will signify by saying aye.

540 Those opposed, nay.

541 The ayes have it and the bill is adopted and forwarded
542 to the full committee.

543 The chair calls up H.R. 9339, and asks the clerk to
544 report.

545 *The Clerk. H.R. 9339, a bill to require the Secretary
546 of Energy to conduct an assessment on the use --

547 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
548 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
549 amendment at any point.

550 So ordered.

551 [The bill follows:]

552

553 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

554

555 *Mr. Latta. Does any member wish to be recognized on
556 the bill?

557 For what purpose does the gentlelady from Tennessee's
558 1st district seek recognition?

559 *Mrs. Harshbarger. Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak
560 on the bill.

561 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
562 minutes to speak on the bill.

563 *Mrs. Harshbarger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

564 My bipartisan legislation with Representative Mullin,
565 the Affordable Innovation for the Grid Act, would direct the
566 Department of Energy, FERC, and NERC to analyze how high-
567 performance computing and AI can enhance our bulk power
568 system and assess what limitations may delay their adoption.

569 As energy demand continues to grow at lightning pace,
570 grid infrastructure needs to operate at peak efficiency and
571 capacity. These emerging technologies have the potential to
572 provide our grid operators with the tools to dramatically
573 speed up the interconnection queue process, expediting
574 timelines to bring new generation online. They can also
575 enhance existing operations through predictive maintenance,
576 identifying what assets need repairs now before they fail.

577 Many utilities and operators have begun integrating
578 these technologies into their operations, but many are
579 apprehensive and would like more information. This study

580 will provide critical analysis of this new technology that
581 will serve both policy-makers and energy stakeholders in
582 informing them how to better adapt to the next wave of energy
583 demand.

584 And with that, Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to
585 support this legislation and I yield back.

586 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much. The gentlelady
587 yields back.

588 Are there other members wishing to be recognized on the
589 bill?

590 For what purpose does the gentleman from California's
591 15th district seek recognition?

592 *Mr. Mullin. I move to strike the last word, Mr. Chair,
593 and speak in support of the bill.

594 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
595 minutes to speak on the bill.

596 *Mr. Mullin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank
597 my colleague, Representative Harshbarger, for her leadership
598 and for partnering with me to co-lead the Affordable
599 Innovation for the Grid Act.

600 Our nation's power demands are surging and electricity
601 rates are rising, so we must pursue every opportunity
602 available to expand grid capacity and maximize efficiency.
603 This bipartisan bill does that by directing the Department of
604 Energy to study how artificial intelligence and high-

605 performance computing can modernize our power system.

606 I am particularly interested in the potential for these
607 advanced technologies to get new energy sources connected to
608 the grid more quickly. Right now generators face an average
609 five-year wait to achieve interconnection, and a significant
610 portion of that delay is due to the complex engineering
611 studies required to ensure grid reliability. But advanced
612 tools are being developed right now that can accurately model
613 the grid in a fraction of the time. In fact, a company in my
614 district, Tapestry, is doing incredible work on this exact
615 problem. By replacing computationally intensive traditional
616 modeling with AI simulations, we can radically compress these
617 timelines.

618 Last March FERC Commissioner Rosner noted that an
619 interconnection study that originally took 2 years was
620 replicated by an advanced computing model in just 10 days.
621 That kind of progress is astounding. And by passing this
622 bill we can begin to increase efficiency, reduce barriers to
623 adoption, and safely speed up energy deployment.

624 I want to again thank Representative Harshbarger for her
625 collaboration and leadership of this important effort.

626 And I yield back.

627 *Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields
628 back.

629 Are there other members wishing to be recognized on the

630 bill?

631 Hearing none, are there any amendments to the bill?

632 Hearing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.

633 9339.

634 All those in favor will signify by saying aye.

635 Those opposed, nay.

636 The ayes have it, and the bill is adopted and forwarded
637 to the full committee.

638 The chair calls up H.R. 9335, and asks the clerk to
639 report.

640 *The Clerk. H.R. 9335, a bill to direct the Secretary
641 of Energy to establish a clearinghouse for advanced
642 transmission technology --

643 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
644 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
645 amendment at any point.

646 So ordered.

647 [The bill follows:]

648

649 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

650

651 *Mr. Latta. Does any member seek recognition on the
652 bill?

653 For what purpose does the gentleman from Texas's 12th
654 district seek recognition?

655 *Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to
656 strike the last word and speak in favor of the bill.

657 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
658 minutes to speak on the bill.

659 *Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

660 Grid congestion is a hidden tax on every American family
661 and business. My bill, the Advanced Transition Technology to
662 Reduce Rates Act, would bring those costs down by making our
663 elected -- our electric grid smarter and more efficient:
664 without mandates, without Federal overreach, and without
665 waiting on Washington.

666 As my home state of Texas continues to rapidly grow,
667 more people and more businesses are demanding even more from
668 the grid. And when the grid is congested, it drives up the
669 cost of energy for utilities. My bill directly addresses
670 that problem by expanding access to advanced transmission
671 technologies, tools like advanced conductors and dynamic line
672 ratings that move electricity more effectively and reduce
673 congestion on the grid.

674 This is truly a common-sense bill. It would create a
675 public DoE database of information on advanced transmission

676 projects, provide voluntary technical support to utilities
677 and state regulators, and direct DoE to develop voluntary
678 best practices to reduce wildfire risks. Also, it exempts
679 certain DoE grants and loans for these projects from NEPA
680 review because states like Texas shouldn't have to wait on
681 extremely long bureaucratic process to modernize their grids
682 -- no new mandates, no top-down requirements, just better
683 tools, streamlined approvals, and the kind of state-driven
684 approach that has always worked best for Texas.

685 I encourage and urge my colleagues to support this
686 legislation, and I yield back.

687 *Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields
688 back.

689 For what purpose does the ranking member of the
690 subcommittee, the gentlelady from Florida, seek recognition?

691 *Ms. Castor. I move to strike the last word.

692 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
693 minutes --

694 *Ms. Castor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

695 *Mr. Latta. -- to speak on the bill.

696 *Ms. Castor. While I strongly support the general
697 thrust of Representative Goldman's bill promoting advanced
698 transmission technologies, or ATTs, I do want to highlight my
699 concerns with one provision. Section 2© of the bill creates
700 a carve-out that exempts any Department of Energy funding for

701 ATTs from the requirements of the National Environmental
702 Policy Act, or NEPA.

703 For the last few years Congress has had a debate around
704 the role of environmental review, including the question of
705 how or if Federal grants or financial assistance should be
706 subject to NEPA. Frankly, that question is better left to
707 the broader permitting discussions that are underway right
708 now, and I don't want it to poison what is going on, our
709 much, much narrower discussion here about the role of ATTs.

710 There is a lot I do like in this bill. I think the
711 clearinghouse that the bill establishes at DoE would
712 genuinely be very useful. The best practices for wildfire
713 mitigation that it promotes could be a game-changer,
714 especially as climate change makes more and more of the
715 country at risk for wildfires. So while today's -- while
716 today we are going to hammer out some bipartisan progress, I
717 have to request that we save the NEPA debates for the broader
718 permitting conversation and let this bill be only about
719 unlocking the potential of these advanced technologies.

720 Thanks, and I yield back.

721 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back. Is
722 -- are there any other members wishing to be recognized to
723 speak on the bill?

724 Hearing none, are there any amendments on the bill?

725 For what --

726 *Mr. Goldman. Mr. Chairman?

727 *Mr. Latta. -- does the gentleman from Texas's 12th
728 district seek recognition?

729 *Mr. Goldman. I have an amendment at the desk.

730 *Mr. Latta. The clerk will report.

731 *The Clerk. Amendment to H.R. 9335 offered by Mr.
732 Goldman of Texas. Page 6, beginning on line 1, strike "loan
733 or grant" --

734 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the reading of the
735 amendment is dispensed with.

736 [The amendment of Mr. Goldman follows:]

737

738 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

739

740 *Mr. Latta. And the gentleman is recognized for five
741 minutes in support of the amendment.

742 *Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in
743 support of this amendment which clarifies the NEPA exclusion
744 for Department of Energy funding programs that support
745 advanced transmission technologies.

746 The amendment ensures that cooperative agreements are
747 covered alongside loans and grants so that the Federal
748 Government gets out of the way and lets utilities do the work
749 to modernize their systems. This amendment strengthens the
750 NEPA exclusion to make sure these innovative technologies can
751 be deployed quickly in Texas and around the country.

752 I urge my colleagues to support the amendment and yield
753 back.

754 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

755 Is there discussion any further discussion on the
756 amendment?

757 Hearing none, if no further discussion, the vote occurs
758 on the amendment.

759 All those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

760 Those opposed, nay.

761 The ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to. Are
762 there any further amendments to the bill?

763 Hearing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.
764 9335, as amended.

765 All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

766 Those opposed, nay.

767 The ayes have it and the bill, as amended, is adopted
768 and forwarded to the full committee.

769 The chair now calls up H.R. 9340 and asks the clerk to
770 report.

771 *The Clerk. H.R. 9340, a bill to amend the Public
772 Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish a
773 Federal standard --

774 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
775 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
776 amendment at any point.

777 So ordered.

778 [The bill follows:]

779

780 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

781

782 *Mr. Latta. Does anyone seek to be recognized on the
783 bill?

784 For what purpose does the gentleman from Colorado's 8th
785 district seek recognition?

786 *Mr. Evans. I move to strike the last word, Mr.
787 Chairman.

788 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
789 minutes to speak on the bill.

790 *Mr. Evans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I, of course,
791 want to thank my partner, the ranking member, for her support
792 of this bipartisan bill, H.R. 9340, the Ratepayer Protection
793 Act.

794 This legislation is shaped by directly what I am hearing
795 from my constituents -- families, farmers, small businesses
796 -- who are concerned about the cost of living, especially as
797 they see growth in electricity demand surge all around them.

798 Two things can be true. The AI phenomenon, that
799 toothpaste ain't going back into the tube. The only question
800 is, do we lead in it or do we cede ground to the Chinese?
801 And if you are concerned about AI, you need to be terrified
802 about what happens if communist China is leading in this
803 space. And so we have to have the framework in place not
804 just for the nation and not just for national security, but
805 in Colorado. We are a massive aerostate space [sic]. And in
806 conversations, the growing technology in space and space

807 development requires being able to crunch a lot of data, and
808 that ties back to data centers.

809 But the second thing is also true: these costs should
810 not be borne by ratepayers. And people want to know, how are
811 we going to pay for this? And that is what this bipartisan
812 bill does it. It says loud and clear that we cannot
813 accelerate growth on the backs of Americans who are working
814 hard to pay their electric bill at the end of every month.
815 And the Ratepayer Protection Act requires each state
816 regulatory authority to consider adopting a large load
817 standard, one that applies to customers with 100 megawatts or
818 more of power demand at their peak at a single facility -- so
819 things like large data centers and hyperscalers -- because
820 these are the customers that can single-handedly trigger the
821 need for new generation, new substations, new transmission
822 lines. And without these guardrails, those costs can get
823 pushed on to everyone else. This bill stops that.

824 The Ratepayer Protection Act rests on three common-sense
825 principles.

826 First, large load customers should cover the full
827 incremental cost of any generation, transmission, or
828 distribution upgrades needed to serve their load. And if a
829 data center needs a new high voltage line or a new generating
830 station to meet that load, they are responsible for those
831 costs, not businesses or families.

832 Second, contracts should include meaningful financial
833 assurances, up front and long term, to make sure that these
834 large load demand entities have the money to be able to pay
835 for this built-out infrastructure. Communities should not be
836 left paying for infrastructure built by a single customer who
837 later scales back or relocates.

838 Third, this bill has flexibility. It says the what, but
839 it leaves the how to the states. It does not impose a
840 Federal mandatory standard. Instead, it provides a
841 thoughtful requirement for states to consider how they
842 connect these large loads. States know their grids, their
843 industries, and all of these stakeholders need to engage
844 together with their local utilities, counties, and local
845 governments to decide what approach is best for them.

846 This builds upon the success of the President's
847 Ratepayer Protection Pledge, which is -- and this legislation
848 represents that public-private commitment to ensuring a
849 responsible economic growth and lower the cost for community
850 members. Expanding the electric power system and adding more
851 paying customers, that actually can improve reliability,
852 strengthen the grid, reduce long-term costs, and harden
853 infrastructure against outages and surges in demands. When
854 large load customers are picking up the tab for all of those
855 things, communities actually see the benefits from that
856 improved infrastructure.

857 In my community and many others across the country,
858 people are anxious about the pace of data center development.
859 They are not opposed to innovation, they just want assurances
860 that their monthly bills aren't going to go up. And this
861 bill is particularly important for states like Colorado which
862 have not yet set a standard for how large loads like data
863 centers should be integrated into the grid. Colorado has
864 debated data center-related proposals, but without a
865 framework and a nudge, families and businesses remain at risk
866 for higher utility bills.

867 The Bipartisan Rate Protection Act gives states like
868 Colorado a responsible policy foundation to work from, and
869 reassures community members that they will be protected from
870 price surges. This bill is bipartisan. It is common sense.
871 It keeps energy costs low for Americans, and it helps us
872 build partnerships that build and improve the reliability and
873 the affordability of the energy backbone that we need to
874 compete and win in the AI area, and specifically in Colorado
875 that we need to protect our massive aerospace economy.

876 I urge my colleagues to support the Ratepayer Protection
877 Act and yield back.

878 *Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields
879 back the balance of his time, and the chair now recognizes
880 the gentlelady from Florida, the ranking member of the
881 subcommittee, for five minutes.

882 *Ms. Castor. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I want
883 to thank Representative Evans, too, for being my partner on
884 this bill, the Ratepayer Protection Act.

885 You know, communities across the country are very
886 nervous, including communities back home in my home state of
887 Florida. They are facing very complex technical decisions
888 about how to cite or approve data centers. They are hearing
889 about the potential for jobs and increased tax revenue, but
890 they are also concerned with how that is going to affect
891 electricity rates for the folks they represent, a lot of
892 hard-working families and small business owners.

893 And those neighbors also are -- when you have watched
894 some of these debates, many are angry, many are anxious,
895 others are scared. It goes into this context of higher
896 inflation, an affordability squeeze and high cost of living.
897 Electricity bills are already sky high, so we have to act.
898 That is why this is an important first step.

899 This is also an opportunity for our country and for all
900 of us, because I believe we can address the increased energy
901 demand and help consumers lower cost by updating and
902 modernizing America's electric grid. Most of the power grid
903 across the United States was built in the 1960s and 1970s.
904 It is reaching the end of its useful life. It is
905 increasingly burdened by extreme events driven by the heating
906 climate, which means that we need to make significant

907 investments in our grid.

908 And this is the United States of America. This is the
909 home to innovation. And we have all sorts of new
910 technological tools at our disposal to help address this with
911 the right guardrails. And that is why this is a very
912 fundamental early guardrail to protect the folks we represent
913 back home to make sure they are not bearing the burden of
914 higher electric bills and higher costs at this time.

915 We are already starting to see some of these innovations
916 happen. A few examples: earlier this month Google announced
917 it would fund a 100-megawatt virtual power plant in PJM,
918 aggregating distributed energy resources from customers
919 across the northeast; in Minnesota Google is also funding a
920 utility distributed procurement program which will deploy
921 batteries at customer sites across the state -- this frees up
922 the grid capacity while improving community resilience and
923 helping unlock cleaner, cheaper energy; in Nevada the Public
924 Utilities Commission approved a clean transition tariff
925 allowing large customers to pay a premium for power from
926 emerging energy technologies like advanced geothermal.

927 But here we are at this moment, at this time. The
928 Ratepayer Protection Act takes the first step to unlocking
929 the opportunity for innovation, but protecting consumers. It
930 places the cost burden solely on the large load customers.

931 So again I want to thank Representative Evans, Chairman

932 Guthrie, Chairman Latta. I hope we can do more to ensure
933 that these large loads are also served by cleaner, cheaper
934 energy with battery storage, so I am eager to continue
935 advancing real bipartisan solutions. With the partnership of
936 innovative companies and forward-looking regulators, we can
937 use this opportunity to build an energy system that works for
938 everyone, not just the special interests that want to buy
939 their way through. Our neighbors back home are counting on
940 us, so I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.

941 And I yield back my time.

942 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back.
943 Are there any other members wishing to be recognized?

944 The gentleman from -- for what purpose does the
945 gentleman from Texas's 11th district seek recognition?

946 *Mr. Pfluger. To speak in favor of this bill.

947 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
948 minutes to speak on the bill.

949 *Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like
950 to speak in favor of the Ratepayer Protection Act, and I
951 thank Mr. Evans from Colorado for his leadership on it.

952 In west Texas, where I represent, we are seeing
953 tremendous interest in this subject, specifically in data
954 center development. And there is a lot of questions on this.
955 We know that these facilities can bring jobs, they can bring
956 investment, and they can bring economic growth. But I think

957 the questions are around them bringing -- imposing a burden
958 of significant amounts of electricity and, in some cases, new
959 generation and transmission and distribution infrastructure
960 that would be required to do that.

961 The families and the farmers, ranchers, and small
962 businesses already connected to the grid should not be forced
963 to subsidize those costs. And if a large new load requires
964 new infrastructure, the entities creating that demand should
965 be paying for it. This bill helps ensure that as we build
966 the infrastructure needed to support AI and other emerging
967 technologies, and we do so in a way that protects ratepayers
968 and keeps electricity affordable for the people who depend on
969 it every day.

970 We want America to lead the world in artificial
971 intelligence, and that will require building more power. But
972 winning the AI race cannot come at the expense of the people
973 already paying their electric bills every month. Innovation
974 and economic growth should lower costs and create
975 opportunities for Americans, not shift the bill onto hard-
976 working ratepayers. So I think this bill gets it exactly
977 right. It supports growth, it protects consumers, and it
978 helps ensure that existing ratepayers are not left holding
979 the bag for new large load development.

980 And I will just say, I think that we, as a Committee on
981 Energy and Commerce, Mr. Chairman, need to be clear-eyed on

982 the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has every incentive
983 to be working through the information channels, working
984 through misinformation channels, using social media outlets,
985 non-factual outlets to sway the public opinion, and I think
986 that is why a bill like this can push back on that.

987 And we can do all of these things that are required. We
988 can keep protection for our communities, but we can also
989 compete against China. So I urge my colleagues on both sides
990 of the aisle to pass this legislation.

991 And I yield back.

992 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back and
993 the chair recognizes the gentleman from California's 5th
994 district. For what purpose does the gentleman wish to seek
995 recognition?

996 *Mr. Peters. Mr. Chair, I move to strike the last word.

997 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman is recognized for
998 five minutes to speak on the bill.

999 *Mr. Peters. Thank you. I want to commend Chairs
1000 Guthrie and Latta, as well as Ranking Members Pallone and
1001 Castor for the bipartisan work that has gone into the hearing
1002 today. I also want to thank Mr. Evans for this bill, in
1003 particular, his work on this, and also the staff of both
1004 sides for working together to get some agreement here. I
1005 think all of us come here trying to get things done, and I
1006 know the staff has a big role in that. So I want to thank

1007 you for working and getting us some good products.

1008 At nearly every hearing this year I have talked about
1009 the significant growth in energy demand every region in the
1010 United States is facing. And even though that growth is very
1011 exciting, it comes with real challenges. And these bills are
1012 attempting to deal with that.

1013 Americans are feeling the strain of these challenges on
1014 their wallets. Electricity prices are eight percent higher
1015 today than they were a year ago. Some projections show
1016 residential utility rates climbing as much as 18 percent in
1017 the coming years. I have also been saying at nearly every
1018 hearing this Congress that this committee is wasting time
1019 debating old Biden-era policies. We are talking about
1020 cutting regulations for snowmobiles. Today we are not doing
1021 that, and I am grateful. These bills are a welcome change,
1022 and we are still -- but we are still on track to lose our
1023 competitive edge to nations like China if we don't build on
1024 today's bipartisan work.

1025 In the 2020s China has completed more than 8,200 miles
1026 of high-voltage, long-range transmission lines, 8,200, while
1027 the United States has built only 375. European utilities are
1028 also rapidly increasing the minimum transfer capacity between
1029 countries to move power back and forth. Over 125,000 miles
1030 of advanced conductors, which can help us get the most out of
1031 the grid, have been installed in India, Europe, and China.

1032 The U.S. has installed less than 10 percent of that.

1033 The North American Reliability Corporation, who is
1034 responsible for reliability in these assessments, has told us
1035 that the country needs 35 gigawatts of interregional transfer
1036 capacity just to keep the lights on. If our North Star is
1037 getting more generation on the grid, reducing rates, and
1038 making the grid more resilient, we have to direct FERC to act
1039 on our interregional transmission planning rule. This
1040 rulemaking will show regions how we can get to those 35
1041 gigawatts without prescribing any outcomes or forcing anyone
1042 to build anything in particular.

1043 Right now, without meaningful action on planning, we are
1044 spending over \$25 billion on transmission and distribution,
1045 an all-time high, but 90 percent of that is local reliability
1046 upgrades and the replacement of old equipment. The spending
1047 on inefficient solutions crowds out more efficient projects
1048 like interregional transmission, drives up rates without
1049 meaningful new transmission capacity that would lower rates
1050 and improve reliability. These projects receive limited
1051 scrutiny, they are not transparent, and they fall in the
1052 regulatory gap between states and FERC, driving up costs for
1053 everyone.

1054 We need planning so we can evaluate lower cost, more
1055 efficient, and larger-scale alternatives that give consumers
1056 much more bang for their buck. Studies have found that for

1057 every \$1 invested in larger-scale interregional lines,
1058 consumers receive nearly \$5 in benefits.

1059 I will support the bills we are considering today
1060 because they are bipartisan, common sense, and are down -- a
1061 downpayment on real reforms, and I look forward to working
1062 with my colleagues to strengthen these bills, add some more,
1063 and ensure we are meeting the current moment.

1064 Thank you, and I yield back.

1065 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back the
1066 balance of his time. The chair recognizes the at-large
1067 member, the gentlelady from North Dakota. For what purpose
1068 does the gentlelady seek recognition?

1069 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Mr. Chairman, I seek to strike the
1070 last word.

1071 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
1072 minutes to speak on the bill.

1073 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1074 First I want to thank my friends, Gabe Evans and Kathy
1075 Castor, for their bipartisan work on this Ratepayer
1076 Protection Act. This legislation is an important step
1077 towards protecting American families from increased
1078 electricity costs and making sure we get cost allocation
1079 right.

1080 At its core, this issue comes down to a very simple
1081 principle: those who cause costs should pay for those costs

1082 on our transmission grid and our energy systems. For
1083 decades, regulators, utilities, and consumer advocates have
1084 generally agreed on this principle. If a customer or a class
1085 of customers creates the need for new infrastructure, the
1086 costs associated with serving that demand should be borne by
1087 those customers and those who benefitted from it, not shifted
1088 on to everybody else. That principle is especially important
1089 today as we see unprecedented growth in large loads across
1090 our country.

1091 America needs more power. We want to build things
1092 again. We want manufacturing, innovation, artificial
1093 intelligence, and economic growth. But we must pursue that
1094 growth in a way that protects families and small businesses
1095 from subsidizing infrastructure built primarily to serve
1096 others. Earlier this year our subcommittee held a hearing on
1097 this topic. I asked every witness a simple question: Is it
1098 fair for American families to pay for infrastructure upgrades
1099 driven by large energy users? Every witness answered the
1100 same way: no.

1101 I then asked whether large loads, including data
1102 centers, have demonstrated a willingness to pay for the
1103 infrastructure needed to serve their demand. Again, every
1104 witness agreed: yes. And that is a very important point.
1105 The conversation is often framed as a choice between economic
1106 growth and affordable electricity. In reality, we can and

1107 must have both if we get the cost allocation right.

1108 In my home state of North Dakota we have worked
1109 carefully to structure rates for customers and large load
1110 customers so they cover the costs they create. When done
1111 correctly, new load can actually strengthen the system,
1112 improve asset utilization, and help lower costs for existing
1113 customers rather than increase them. In my state we have
1114 saved customers \$30 million. But that only works when we
1115 maintain the principle that costs causers pay, and this is a
1116 different take on beneficiaries pay which has been the
1117 standard. Focusing on cost causers first more granularly
1118 assigns the costs on our system.

1119 Families should not be asked to subsidize an
1120 infrastructure bill to serve some of the largest and most
1121 sophisticated companies in the world. Likewise, businesses
1122 making major investments deserve transparency and certainty
1123 about the costs that they will bear. Getting cost allocation
1124 right protects hard-working Americans, supports economic
1125 development, and helps build the infrastructure needed to
1126 meet growing demand. That is why the Ratepayer Protection
1127 Act is such an important step forward, and I appreciate the
1128 committee's bipartisan work to advance it. It is a great
1129 step, but we also have more work to guide and direct cost
1130 allocation to protect ratepayers and promote affordability.
1131 We have more work to do, and I look forward to working with

1132 my colleagues and the committee staff in that end.

1133 Mr. Chairman, thank you and I yield back.

1134 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back.

1135 Are there other members wishing to be recognized on the bill?

1136 For what purpose does the gentlelady from Washington's
1137 8th district seek recognition?

1138 *Ms. Schrier. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last
1139 word.

1140 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
1141 minutes to speak on the bill.

1142 *Ms. Schrier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1143 AI brings both tremendous opportunity and risk. Data
1144 center build-out is a big concern for Washington State and we
1145 are hearing that same concern all across the country. AI
1146 development continues to accelerate, and people are worried.
1147 They are worried about what AI might mean for their jobs and
1148 for their privacy and for their kids' education and for
1149 society. And they are worried also about the tremendous
1150 energy demand of data centers and what it will mean for their
1151 utility bills and whether they can keep the lights on.

1152 Compared to last year, we are paying nearly 15 percent
1153 more on our utility bills in the 8th district. And the
1154 experts tell me that by 2028 the northwest energy supply may
1155 not always be capable of meeting demand, and that is due to
1156 multiple things: changing climate; the Trump

1157 Administration's cuts to investments in clean and affordable
1158 energy; sluggish building from permitting and red tape;
1159 skyrocketing growth of data center energy use; and frankly --
1160 and I have talked about it in this committee before --
1161 holding hostage a decommissioned coal plant -- this is being
1162 done by the Administration -- that was being converted to run
1163 on liquid natural gas.

1164 And while these companies, AI companies, tech, reap
1165 tremendous benefits from advancing AI using our data and our
1166 power, hard-working families who are already being hit with
1167 rising energy prices, they can't be left in the dark with an
1168 unpredictable energy supply and stuck with the bill. And if
1169 big companies want the energy, they are just going to have to
1170 reach into their pockets and fund it and build it and connect
1171 it to the grid if that is what is needed.

1172 So I want to thank Representative Evans and
1173 Representative Castor for introducing this bill. I am proud
1174 to support the Ratepayer Protection Act.

1175 And I yield back.

1176 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back the
1177 balance of her time.

1178 Are there other members wishing to seek recognition?

1179 For what purpose does the gentlelady from California's
1180 7th district seek recognition?

1181 *Ms. Matsui. I move to strike the last word, Mr.

1182 Chairman.

1183 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
1184 minutes to speak on the bill.

1185 *Ms. Matsui. Thank you very much. I move to strike the
1186 last word and speak in support of this bill. I am glad we
1187 are holding this markup. I support this legislation because
1188 it is a no-brainer. American families should not be paying
1189 for tech companies' utility bills.

1190 The baseline protections set in this bill are a good
1191 starting point. But to be frank, this is really the bare
1192 minimum. We could and we should be doing so much more to
1193 bring down Americans' utility costs. We are in the middle of
1194 an energy crisis, and everyone who opens an energy bill every
1195 month knows it.

1196 Democrats know the electric grid needed major upgrades
1197 to meet growing demand. That is why Democrats invested
1198 billions of dollars in building the next generation of clean
1199 energy infrastructure when we were in control. And for years
1200 we warned that failing to make those investments would drive
1201 electricity costs even higher. Republicans ignored those
1202 warnings. As a result, the cost of electricity has gone up
1203 18 percent since Mr. Trump took office.

1204 Instead of lowering costs, Republicans and President
1205 Trump have spent the last two years moving in the wrong
1206 direction, repealing clean energy programs that saved

1207 Americans money, canceling hundreds of grants for critical
1208 energy infrastructure, and blocking hundreds of solar and
1209 wind projects across the country. It is ridiculous, and
1210 American families are paying for it.

1211 So I am glad we are holding this markup, but let's not
1212 pretend like this is going to solve the problem. It is only
1213 a good first start. I urge my colleagues to talk to their
1214 constituents. It is time to put aside the partisan nonsense
1215 and get serious about lowering electricity costs.

1216 And with that I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

1217 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back the
1218 balance of her time.

1219 Are there other members seeking recognition on the bill?

1220 For what purpose does the gentlelady from Virginia's 4th
1221 district seek recognition?

1222 *Ms. McClellan. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move to strike
1223 the last word.

1224 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
1225 minutes to speak on the bill.

1226 *Ms. McClellan. Thank you. If any of you have watched
1227 local news while you have been here during vote weeks, you
1228 have seen that data centers and their impacts on communities
1229 and on consumers has been in the news quite a bit in
1230 Virginia, which should be no surprise as we are the data
1231 center capital of the globe. And we have really been

1232 grappling as a commonwealth in particular with how to balance
1233 the need to meet our energy demands in an increasingly
1234 digital world where U.S. households have, on average, 21
1235 devices that are connected to the internet.

1236 And if you think that is crazy, my husband and I
1237 counted. And when you count your Alexa, if your kids have a
1238 Switch, phones, devices, your smart TV, your alarm systems
1239 that you can remotely monitor, you get to 21 pretty fast.
1240 And that was before the AI revolution jump-started the need
1241 for data centers and for the electricity and, I would add,
1242 water that they consume, and the worry of constituents that
1243 they are bearing the brunt of that cost.

1244 I during the recess period -- and my district is rural,
1245 urban, and suburban, and everywhere I went during the
1246 district work period, when asked about my work on the Energy
1247 and Commerce Committee, the first question I get is, tell us
1248 about these data centers and what you all are doing about
1249 them, and how you are going to make sure that at a time when
1250 we already can't pay, we are struggling to pay our electric
1251 bills, and electric bills have risen as much as 13 percent
1252 nationwide since last year, they are looking for us to strike
1253 that balance. And these bills are really a good starting
1254 point.

1255 And in Virginia our state corporation commission, our
1256 state regulatory body approved in November the creation of a

1257 new rate class for data centers and similar big users of
1258 electricity to try to begin to grapple with that. But
1259 whether your state begins to develop such a rate shouldn't --
1260 you know, that -- whether you are bearing the brunt of the
1261 load and paying for the load of data centers shouldn't depend
1262 on which state you are in. And that is why this bill is so
1263 important. But we need to make sure they don't just consider
1264 establishing a new rate class, but that they actually do it.

1265 And as we are working through these bills, which are an
1266 incredibly important first step, there is one stakeholder we
1267 haven't talked about yet that needs to be -- have a seat at
1268 the table, and that is the local governments that are under
1269 pressure to meet their own revenue needs and are being
1270 courted very heavily by these data centers. Some -- and some
1271 in my district find themselves in this position -- are so
1272 desperate for the economic development that can come from a
1273 data center that they are not part of the equation on what is
1274 the load going to be not just in this community, but for the
1275 rest of the state and for the region.

1276 So as we go forward with this bill, these bills which
1277 are an incredibly important first step, let's make sure we
1278 take the next step and bring all the stakeholders to the
1279 table and ensure that whether you are in Virginia or Colorado
1280 or South Dakota or North Dakota, that you all are sure that
1281 this body is making sure you are not paying the price and

1282 bearing the burden for the AI needs of big business.

1283 And with that I yield back.

1284 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back.

1285 Are there any other members?

1286 For what purpose does the gentleman from New York's 20th
1287 district seek recognition?

1288 *Mr. Tonko. Mr. Chair, I move to strike the last word.

1289 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
1290 minutes to speak on the bill.

1291 *Mr. Tonko. Thank you. I appreciate the committee for
1292 taking up this bill, including Ranking Member Castor's
1293 leadership. We should be doing whatever necessary to protect
1294 residential ratepayers from undue system costs imposed by
1295 large loads, especially data centers and crypto mining
1296 facilities.

1297 A PURPA 111(d) amendment is a good first step, but I do
1298 not think we should stop there. If we really want to ensure
1299 our constituents stop being burdened by rising utility bills,
1300 we should be getting at other root causes of energy
1301 affordability. So I do hope this is just the first step of
1302 several that we can advance to truly protect ratepayers.

1303 I would also mention that this bill defines large loads
1304 as greater than 100 megawatts and captures more than just
1305 data centers, which may undercut manufacturers'
1306 competitiveness. I fully acknowledge that, wherever we draw

1307 the megawatt threshold for large loads, it will be somewhat
1308 arbitrary. But I believe it would be more appropriate to
1309 pick a threshold that reflects the consensus already emerging
1310 at the state and RTO levels, and that number is 50 megawatts.
1311 This would align with the definition adopted by the PJM Board
1312 of Managers in January. Even 50 megawatts is a lot of power.
1313 It would be more than enough to power every home in my
1314 hometown many times over. That is surely large enough to
1315 impose costs on residential ratepayers, and I think it is
1316 worth us having a closer examination of this definition
1317 moving forward.

1318 You know, we focused a lot today in the discussion on
1319 the markup of data centers and their impact, but it goes well
1320 beyond, I believe, the electric utility bill sticker shock.
1321 We are talking about water impact, we are talking about
1322 quality of water, water supplies that are threatened. We are
1323 talking about soil contamination. We can talk about air
1324 pollution. There are a lot of aspects to this whole effort.

1325 And to, you know, Ms. McClellan's comments, you know, we
1326 need to look at the whole picture and all of the impacts and
1327 come together with a comprehensive plan that will best serve
1328 consumers out there and the general public, per se.

1329 So with that, Mr. Chair, I thank you and yield back.

1330 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentleman yields back. Are
1331 there any other members wishing to be recognized on the bill?

1332 Are there any amendments on the bill?

1333 Seeing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.

1334 9340.

1335 All those in favor will signify by saying aye.

1336 Those opposed, nay.

1337 The ayes have it. The bill is adopted and forwarded to
1338 the full committee.

1339 The chair calls up H.R. 6633 and asks the clerk to
1340 report.

1341 *The Clerk. H.R. 6633, a bill to establish a best
1342 available transmission conductor standard for certain
1343 transmission --

1344 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
1345 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
1346 amendment at any point.

1347 So ordered.

1348 [The bill follows:]

1349

1350 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1351

1352 *Mr. Latta. Is there any member seeking recognition on
1353 the bill?

1354 For what purpose does the gentlelady, the at-large
1355 member from North Dakota, seek recognition?

1356 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment in
1357 the nature of a substitute to H.R. 6633.

1358 *Mr. Latta. Is there a specific number on it? Does the
1359 clerk have it?

1360 Okay, the clerk will report.

1361 *The Clerk. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to
1362 H.R. 6633, offered by Mrs. Fedorchak of North Dakota.

1363 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the reading of the
1364 amendment is dispensed with.

1365 [The amendment of Mrs. Fedorchak follows:]

1366

1367 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1368

1369 *Mr. Latta. And the gentlelady is recognized for five
1370 minutes in support of her amendment.

1371 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking
1372 Member, and members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the
1373 opportunity to speak on my legislation, the High Capacity
1374 Grid Act, and I want to thank the committee staff for their
1375 work to include this bill in today's markup.

1376 This legislation addresses one of the biggest challenges
1377 facing our electric grid and one of the biggest drivers of
1378 rising electricity costs for American families, and that is
1379 transmission, electric transmission.

1380 When people think about rising utility bills, they often
1381 focus on the cost of generating electricity. But the reality
1382 is that transmission costs are the fastest growing component
1383 of electric bills. According to a Brattle and Energy
1384 Information Administration study, transmission costs have
1385 increased more than 180 percent since 2005, even as
1386 generation costs have declined.

1387 At the same time, electricity demand is growing rapidly.
1388 New manufacturing, data centers, electrification, and
1389 population growth are placing unprecedented demands on our
1390 aging grid. Yet permitting and construction -- constructing
1391 new transmission lines can take years, often more than a
1392 decade from concept to completion. Hopefully, we will fix
1393 that with permitting reform. But meanwhile, we cannot permit

1394 and build our way out of this challenge fast enough, even
1395 with permitting reform. It just won't be fast enough, so we
1396 need to get more capacity out of the infrastructure we
1397 already have.

1398 The good news is there is a lot of ways to do that, and
1399 that is exactly what the High Capacity Grid Act does. First,
1400 it requires utilities building new interstate transmission
1401 lines or rebuilding existing ones to use the best
1402 commercially and economically available transmission
1403 conductors whenever practical. Second, it helps maximize the
1404 capacity of every transmission corridor by incentivizing
1405 advanced conductor technologies, technology that can often
1406 carry significantly more electricity than traditional wires
1407 on the same structures and right-of-ways. And third, it
1408 protects families from paying for outdated technology by
1409 creating the precedent that utilities cannot pass the cost of
1410 lower-performing conductors onto ratepayers unless they can
1411 clearly demonstrate that those conductors are the best option
1412 for a specific project.

1413 This is a common-sense approach. Advanced conductors
1414 can dramatically increase the amount of electricity delivered
1415 over existing corridors while improving efficiency, safety,
1416 and reliability. In many cases they allow us to double
1417 capacity without acquiring new rights of way or waiting years
1418 for new permits. That is good for reliability, it is good

1419 for affordability, and it is good for hard-working families
1420 who are ultimately paying the bill.

1421 The High Capacity Grid Act is about modernizing our grid
1422 with today's technology, maximizing existing infrastructure,
1423 and delivering more power at a lower cost. I urge my
1424 colleagues to support this legislation.

1425 And I yield back.

1426 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back the
1427 balance of her time, and the chair recognizes -- for what
1428 purpose does the gentlelady from California seek recognition?

1429 *Ms. Matsui. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last
1430 word.

1431 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
1432 minutes to strike the last word.

1433 *Ms. Matsui. Thank you. I move to strike the last word
1434 and speak in support of this amendment.

1435 Advance conductors play an important role in lowering
1436 electricity bills. By allowing power lines to carry more
1437 electricity, advance conductors can effectively increase the
1438 capacity of the grid for far less money than it takes to
1439 build a new power line or a new power plant. That saves
1440 money. And ultimately, that means lower electricity bills
1441 for American families. It is one of the many small solutions
1442 that will help move the needle in the right direction.

1443 So I want to thank Congressman Fedorchak for leading on

1444 this important bill, and I want to thank the committee staff
1445 for working with my office on this bill. I believe the
1446 legislation has moved in the right direction, and I look
1447 forward to continuing to work with Congresswoman Fedorchak
1448 and the committee to improve this bill.

1449 And thank you, and I yield back.

1450 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back the
1451 balance of her time. Are there any other members wishing to
1452 be recognized on the amendment?

1453 Hearing none, without further discussion, the vote
1454 occurs on the amendment.

1455 All those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

1456 All those opposed, nay.

1457 The ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to.

1458 Are there any further amendments on the bill?

1459 Hearing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.
1460 6633, as amended.

1461 All those will signify by saying aye in favor.

1462 Those opposed, nay.

1463 The ayes have it. The bill, as amended, is adopted and
1464 forwarded to the full committee.

1465 The chair calls up H.R. 6529 and asks the clerk to
1466 report.

1467 *The Clerk. H.R. 6529, a bill to require the Federal
1468 Energy Regulatory Commission to hold a technical conference

1469 on protecting residential ratepayers from increased costs
1470 associated with large loads.

1471 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
1472 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
1473 amendment at any point.

1474 So ordered.

1475 [The bill follows:]

1476

1477 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1478

1479 *Mr. Latta. Does any member seek recognition on the
1480 bill?

1481 [Pause.]

1482 *Mr. Latta. For what purpose does the ranking member of
1483 the subcommittee, the gentlelady, seek recognition?

1484 *Ms. Castor. I have an amendment at the desk labeled
1485 ANS_HR6529_01.

1486 *Mr. Latta. The clerk will report the amendment.

1487 *The Clerk. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to
1488 H.R. 6529 offered by Ms. Castor of Florida. Strike all after
1489 the enacting clause and insert the following.

1490 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the reading of the
1491 amendment is dispensed with, and the gentlelady is recognized
1492 for five minutes in support of the amendment.

1493 *Ms. Castor. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I also
1494 want to thank our colleague, Representative Landsman, for
1495 drafting this bill. It requires FERC to hold a technical
1496 conference on ways to protect American families and small
1497 businesses from increased costs associated with data centers,
1498 essentially pushing FERC to have its own version of the
1499 legislative hearing that we held back in April on these
1500 issues.

1501 While FERC took a step towards establishing rules of the
1502 road to connect data centers to the power grid last week, all
1503 of the commissioners readily admitted that they are still

1504 seeking more information. So a technical conference would
1505 complement the orders FERC issued last week and help ensure
1506 that each commissioner has -- who has -- they have important
1507 perspectives as they evaluate proposals from grid operators
1508 over the coming months.

1509 I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman and Chairman Guthrie,
1510 and all the professional staff for working together to find a
1511 version of this bill that could help -- that everyone could
1512 support. This amendment reflects those conversations and
1513 helps sharpen the bill's approach, ensuring that FERC focuses
1514 on matters directly within its control and not under state
1515 jurisdiction. I am grateful for the cooperation here, and I
1516 urge all of our colleagues to support both the amendment and
1517 the underlying bill.

1518 I yield back.

1519 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much. The gentlelady
1520 yields back.

1521 Are there any other members wishing to be recognized on
1522 the amendment?

1523 Hearing none, if there is no further discussion, the
1524 vote will occur on the amendment.

1525 All those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

1526 All opposed, nay.

1527 The ayes have it, and the amendment is agreed to. Are
1528 there further amendments on the bill?

1529 Hearing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.
1530 6529, as amended.

1531 All those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

1532 Those opposed, nay.

1533 The ayes have it and the bill is adopted and forwarded
1534 to the full committee.

1535 The chair calls up H.R. 2986 and asks the clerk to
1536 report.

1537 *The Clerk. H.R. 2986, a bill to require the Federal
1538 Energy Regulatory Commission to promulgate regulations to
1539 accelerate --

1540 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
1541 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
1542 amendment at any point.

1543 So ordered.

1544 [The bill follows:]

1545

1546 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1547

1548 *Mr. Latta. Are there any members wishing to be
1549 recognized on the bill?

1550 *Ms. Castor. I have an amendment at the desk, Mr.
1551 Chairman.

1552 *Mr. Latta. Are there any amendments?

1553 *Ms. Castor. I have an amendment at the desk labeled
1554 ANS2986_01.

1555 *Mr. Latta. The clerk will report the amendment.

1556 *The Clerk. Amendment in the nature of a substitute to
1557 H.R. 2986 offered by Ms. Castor of Florida. Strike all after
1558 the --

1559 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the reading of the
1560 amendment is dispensed with.

1561 [The amendment of Ms. Castor follows:]

1562

1563 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1564

1565 *Mr. Latta. And the gentlelady is recognized for five
1566 minutes in support of her amendment.

1567 *Ms. Castor. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1568 Colleagues, all across the United States there are new
1569 energy projects that are stalled. They are waiting in long
1570 lines to interconnect to the grid. This amendment would make
1571 changes to my Expediting Generator Interconnection Procedures
1572 Act which directs FERC to make common-sense updates to speed
1573 up the interconnection process.

1574 This is low hanging fruit. It will reform the outdated
1575 and sluggish interconnection process, will give grid
1576 operators more flexibility, and promote the use of proven
1577 tools like automation. The amendment makes several key
1578 changes to the bill.

1579 First, it directs FERC to immediately initiate a show
1580 cause proceeding for each transmission provider, similar to
1581 the show cause proceedings they initiated last week for
1582 connecting data centers to the grid. This proceeding shall
1583 find that delays beyond 15 months for generator
1584 interconnection agreement are unjust, unreasonable, and
1585 unduly discriminatory.

1586 Within a year of the proceeding FERC must make a final
1587 finding on the generation interconnection procedures for each
1588 transmission provider. If transmission providers fail to
1589 meet this 15-month standard, FERC shall intervene to fix

1590 those processes.

1591 Further, this bill would direct FERC and the Department
1592 of Energy to study the best practices for generator
1593 interconnection queue management, including lessons that can
1594 be applied to regions without an organized wholesale
1595 electricity market.

1596 This bill builds on the bipartisan work that FERC
1597 already is doing, including their recent efforts to
1598 accelerate large load interconnection. We should celebrate
1599 the innovation that this bill provides. It would encourage
1600 among -- we should celebrate the innovation that this bill
1601 would encourage among grid operators. For example, we saw
1602 MISO last year. They instituted an automated process that
1603 was able to nearly replicate in 10 days the result of an
1604 interconnection study that took nearly 2 years to conduct.
1605 We have discussed this and heard from witnesses in this
1606 committee, and everyone was enthusiastic about that, how they
1607 were speeding up interconnection.

1608 So we should all be able to appreciate this type of
1609 common-sense progress. I hope my GOP colleagues will
1610 continue to work with us to advance this important
1611 legislation helping to bring more reliable energy onto the
1612 grid to power the American economy and lower costs for our
1613 neighbors back home. And I want them to know that my team
1614 and I stand ready to work in a bipartisan way to find a path

1615 forward that works for everyone on both sides of the aisle to
1616 speed up the process of building power plants and connecting
1617 them to the grid.

1618 Thank you so much, and I yield back.

1619 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back the
1620 balance of her time and the chair recognizes himself for five
1621 minutes to speak on the amendment.

1622 Again, I want to thank the ranking member from Florida's
1623 14th district for her amendment to the Expediting Generator
1624 Interconnection Procedures Act. This amendment revises the
1625 approach and the underlying bill to provide an overarching
1626 policy.

1627 Interconnection timelines should not extend beyond 15
1628 months. The bill provides discretion for how each region may
1629 address their own interconnection procedures, respecting the
1630 unique differences and need for a bottom-up approach to more
1631 effective electricity policy. Every member here recognizes
1632 the urgency behind interconnecting the right resources
1633 quickly to address our ongoing reliability crisis and affirm
1634 U.S. leadership in the next generation economy.

1635 Having said that, this legislation needs more process to
1636 better understand its potential impact, and it may need
1637 revisions as we conduct that due diligence. While we may not
1638 fully support this legislation in its current form, we are
1639 willing to continue working with the gentlelady and our

1640 Democratic colleagues on it to see if we can find a
1641 bipartisan compromise. Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to
1642 support the amendment.

1643 And I yield back. Are there any other members seeking
1644 recognition on the amendment?

1645 Hearing none, all those in favor of the amendment,
1646 signify by saying aye.

1647 All those opposed, nay.

1648 Hearing none, the amendment is agreed to.

1649 Are there any other amendments on the bill?

1650 Hearing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.
1651 2986, as adopted -- as amended, excuse me.

1652 All those in favor shall signify by saying aye.

1653 Those opposed, nay.

1654 The ayes have it and the bill is adopted and forwarded
1655 to the full committee.

1656 The chair calls up H.R. 9338 and asks the clerk to
1657 report.

1658 *The Clerk. H.R. 9338, a bill to amend title 49 United
1659 States Code to improve the safety of pipeline transportation
1660 and --

1661 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the first reading of the
1662 bill is dispensed with, and the bill will be open for
1663 amendment at any point.

1664 So ordered.

1665 [The bill follows:]

1666

1667 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

1668

1669 *Mr. Latta. Is there any member wishing to seek
1670 recognition on the bill?

1671 [Pause.]

1672 *Mr. Latta. For what purpose does the vice chairman of
1673 the subcommittee seek recognition?

1674 *Mr. Weber. To speak on the bill, I request to speak on
1675 the bill.

1676 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
1677 minutes to speak on the bill.

1678 *Mr. Weber. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for yielding. I
1679 am proud to lead H.R. 9338, the Pipeline Safety
1680 Reauthorization Act of 2026, to reauthorize the Pipeline and
1681 Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, PHMSA, Office of
1682 Pipeline Safety for the next five years.

1683 The bill before us today reflects several updates from
1684 the discussion draft this subcommittee reviewed in March of
1685 this year. Those changes are the result of ongoing
1686 conservation -- conversations with my colleagues across the
1687 aisle as we work toward a strong bipartisan -- bipartisan --
1688 final product. Throughout this process we have worked
1689 closely with stakeholders across the industry and within the
1690 government to develop and refine this legislation, and I look
1691 forward to continuing that collaboration as H.R. 9338
1692 advances to the full committee.

1693 This bill provides PHMSA with the resources and

1694 direction necessary to continue safeguarding more than three
1695 million miles of pipeline infrastructure across these great
1696 United States. From ensuring that PHMSA's cost benefit
1697 analysis remains focused on safety factors within the United
1698 States to promoting best practices across state damage
1699 prevention programs, H.R. 9338 helps strengthen pipeline
1700 safety across the board.

1701 Americans deserve nothing less than our continued effort
1702 to move the needle closer and closer to 100 percent safety,
1703 and this legislation helps do exactly that. Our nation's
1704 pipeline infrastructure operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a
1705 week to safely deliver the reliable and affordable energy
1706 that powers American homes, American businesses, and American
1707 industries while supporting our allies across the world.

1708 Now, few regions in the country can rival the pipeline
1709 infrastructure that we have along the Texas Gulf Coast.
1710 Every day those pipelines help produce, refine, process, and
1711 export the energy that powers America and, again, supports
1712 our allies abroad. In my part of the country we understand
1713 that pipeline infrastructure is often the foundation upon
1714 which everything else is built. Without it Americans would
1715 pay more to heat their homes, fill their gas tanks, power
1716 their businesses, and keep everyday goods on the store
1717 shelves. Texas's 14th district produces and moves more
1718 energy than just about any other district in these United

1719 States of America. Few places better illustrate the
1720 important role pipeline infrastructure plays in our lives.

1721 Whether the energy originates in the Permian Basin or
1722 from our neighbors to the north in Alberta, Canada, producing
1723 it is only half of the battle. American energy dominance
1724 depends on our ability to deliver that energy safely and
1725 reliability to the people, those businesses, and those
1726 industries that depend on this every single day.

1727 I urge my colleagues to support this critical
1728 legislation, and I look forward to continuing the work with
1729 my colleagues across the aisle.

1730 Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

1731 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much. The gentleman
1732 yields back, and the -- for what purpose does the gentleman
1733 from New Jersey seek recognition?

1734 *Mr. Pallone. To strike the last word, Mr. Chairman.

1735 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
1736 minutes to speak on the bill.

1737 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you. I just want to take this
1738 opportunity to comment on the status of our pipeline safety
1739 negotiations and remind everyone that a pipeline safety law
1740 is now nearly three years overdue.

1741 Back in March the subcommittee held a hearing on a draft
1742 bill that every Democrat on this committee felt missed the
1743 mark. Since then we have been engaged in negotiations with

1744 the majority to try to find a bipartisan path forward. But I
1745 want to remind everyone what our disagreements were about.

1746 We were concerned that the bill didn't authorize
1747 adequate funding for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials
1748 Safety Administration, or PHMSA. We were also concerned that
1749 the bill did not authorize a vital grant program funded by
1750 the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that has helped countless
1751 municipal utilities make their pipeline systems safer. Among
1752 other issues, the bill also attempted to criminalize some
1753 protected activities under the First Amendment and did
1754 nothing to strengthen penalties against pipeline operators
1755 who flout the law.

1756 The point on criminal penalties is especially relevant,
1757 Mr. Chairman. Republicans need to know that Democrats cannot
1758 in good conscience agree to the ambiguous language that is
1759 currently in the bill granting the Department of Justice far
1760 too much leeway in determining what counts as interfering
1761 with the operation of a pipeline. Just in the last week we
1762 have seen Americans get arrested on the National Mall for
1763 examining the reflecting pool now that the President has
1764 ruined it, and that is unacceptable. And we will not agree
1765 to anything that risks persecuting Americans for exercising
1766 their First Amendment rights.

1767 My colleague from New York has an amendment that would
1768 help on this point, and I urge members to support it but I

1769 don't think any final product will be perfect. I understand
1770 that. Few bills are. Hopefully we can get to a place where
1771 our members all feel comfortable, and then we can continue
1772 discussions with our colleagues on the Transportation and
1773 Infrastructure Committee while examining the bill that the
1774 Senate passed in April. Otherwise, for the second Congress
1775 in a row Republicans on this committee will have failed to do
1776 the necessary work.

1777 So with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

1778 *The Chair. Mr. Chair?

1779 *Mr. Latta. For what purpose does the chairman of the
1780 full committee seek recognition?

1781 *The Chair. Thanks, thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate
1782 the recognition, and I appreciate the comments --

1783 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
1784 minutes.

1785 *The Chair. Okay I am sorry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
1786 for the time, and I appreciate the comments from my friend,
1787 the ranking member. I know my friend from New York has an
1788 amendment.

1789 And so if somebody physically breaks or attacks or
1790 something in a protest a pipeline, that is a criminal act.
1791 We know that. So that is damage. It is -- the second thing
1792 that people can do, they can do other -- so we are trying to
1793 address -- like, they can turn the pipeline off or they can

1794 do other things to the pipeline that isn't technically
1795 damage, but it damages the pipeline as they go forward.

1796 What we are not trying to do is interfere with people's
1797 First Amendment right to protest with this. I don't want to
1798 criminalize people who are truly protesting and not trying to
1799 affect the operations of the pipeline. And so I know this is
1800 important to you, I know it is obviously important to our
1801 friend from New York, and we would certainly be willing to
1802 work on language to clarify that it needs to be physical --
1803 damage isn't the right word, because turning it off and
1804 affecting the pipeline isn't technically damage. We want
1805 that to not be acceptable behavior, but we absolutely don't
1806 want to criminalize people exercising their First Amendment.
1807 So we would be willing to work on language as we move forward
1808 on this if you would like to do that, and I offer that up.

1809 And I will yield back.

1810 *Mr. Latta. Thank you very much. The gentleman yields
1811 back. Is there further discussion?

1812 For what purpose does the gentlelady from Texas's 7th
1813 district seek recognition?

1814 *Mrs. Fletcher. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move to
1815 strike the last word.

1816 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized to strike the
1817 last word, five minutes.

1818 *Mr. Latta. Thank you, Chairman Latta.

1819 This bill is hugely important to the people that I
1820 represent in Houston. I am, of course, Congressman Weber's
1821 neighbor just a little bit to the West. And companies in
1822 Houston and the people who work there control more than 58
1823 percent of U.S. natural gas pipeline capacity and 33 percent
1824 of U.S. oil pipeline capacity. So I know that the people
1825 that I represent take pipeline safety incredibly seriously,
1826 and there are people who dedicate their entire careers to
1827 making sure that pipelines operate safely and that we get the
1828 energy that we need moved where it needs to be across this
1829 country and around the world.

1830 And, you know, the professionals who work in this
1831 industry know that pipeline safety is paramount, and the
1832 safety for our communities has to remain a priority as the
1833 demand for energy grows, which we talk about on this
1834 subcommittee all the time. And we need to be able to build
1835 the infrastructure to deliver it.

1836 And so to that end, I think that the safety of this
1837 pipeline infrastructure really depends and has always
1838 depended on a working partnership between industry and
1839 government regulators -- in this case, PHMSA. And
1840 unfortunately, in the last year and a half, as we have seen
1841 across the Trump Administration, the President's cuts and
1842 chaotic deregulatory push have left PHMSA struggling to
1843 fulfill its statutory obligations and to do the work that we

1844 need PHMSA to do. We, as citizens, need it; we, the
1845 companies that are operating these pipelines, need it. But
1846 since the beginning of this Administration, more than half of
1847 PHMSA's senior leadership has departed, and several major
1848 rulemakings were abandoned in response to the President's
1849 memorandum on the regulatory freeze pending review.

1850 I am also hearing from folks in the energy industry that
1851 PHMSA just lacks the resources for proper training and isn't
1852 prepared to meet the challenges of growing demand for
1853 pipelines to meet our energy needs. And so I too am happy
1854 with the progress that has been made and that is reflected in
1855 this draft. As I said, this is hugely important for the
1856 people I represent to get this over the finish line. I do
1857 believe there is more work to be done to make sure that PHMSA
1858 has adequate resources now and in the future.

1859 And I also agree with Chairman Pallone that, as
1860 important as it is, I agree with Chairman Guthrie too -- I am
1861 sorry, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Guthrie -- I do
1862 believe it is important to get this right, and I am concerned
1863 about language that would give too much discretion to the
1864 Department of Justice in this Administration in interpreting
1865 and challenging people in their right to protest. We have
1866 certainly seen they are arresting people that are looking at
1867 the reflecting pool.

1868 We take very seriously people's First Amendment right to

1869 speak, and to speak out about the things that matter in their
1870 lives. And so I appreciate, Chairman Guthrie, your statement
1871 about working together, and I really do think it is essential
1872 that we get this right and that we write language that
1873 protects these pipelines and allows them to operate safely at
1874 all times without the dangerous interference that can be
1875 caused while also protecting the rights of American citizens
1876 that, frankly, are being trampled in this Administration.

1877 So in addition to that I just want to add, you know, we
1878 do need PHMSA to be forward looking to ensure pipeline safety
1879 innovation meets the challenges of tomorrow, and that is why
1880 in the last PHMSA reauthorization I worked on a technology
1881 pilot program. That was in the 2020 bill, and that was back
1882 when I was on the T&I Committee. But the technology
1883 demonstration program was designed to advance the latest high
1884 tech inspection technologies and analytics that could be used
1885 to make pipelines safer. And I would really like to see us
1886 be able to work that into this reauthorization. It was a
1887 bipartisan program, and it is included in the Senate PHMSA
1888 reauthorization.

1889 So I am very hopeful that, in addition to the work that
1890 we are doing to address the real concerns that are laid out
1891 here, that we can include that so that we can do everything
1892 we can to ensure that we can continue to operate and build
1893 the pipelines that we need for the things that we want across

1894 this country in a way that is safe and consistent with the
1895 safety of our communities across the country.

1896 So I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for that and I yield back.

1897 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back the
1898 balance of her time. Are there any other members wishing to
1899 speak on the bill?

1900 Does the gentlelady wish to speak on the bill, or have
1901 an --

1902 *Voice. Just offer an amendment.

1903 *Mr. Latta. Okay. Are there any other members wishing
1904 to speak on the bill?

1905 Are there any amendments on the bill?

1906 No, I am sorry, did you want -- does the gentlelady from
1907 California wish to speak on the bill?

1908 I am sorry. For what purpose does the gentlelady from
1909 California's 7th district wish --

1910 *Ms. Matsui. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last
1911 word and speak in opposition to this bill.

1912 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady is recognized for five
1913 minutes to speak on the bill.

1914 *Ms. Matsui. Thank you very much. I want to make clear
1915 I do not support this bill in its current form.

1916 Pipeline safety is incredibly important. It is critical
1917 that we get this right. This bill, as currently written,
1918 does not meet this moment, and it does not serve the needs of

1919 my constituents.

1920 Under President Trump the Pipeline and Hazardous
1921 Materials Administration has been gutted, and enforcement of
1922 pipeline safety has plummeted, endangering public health and
1923 threatening Americans' lives. In some cases PHMSA has even
1924 been turned into a political weapon. In California President
1925 Trump is using PHMSA to force the restart of offshore oil
1926 drilling, trampling all over California's authority to
1927 protect our coast and our communities from disastrous oil
1928 spills.

1929 This bill would allow PHMSA to ignore environmental
1930 impacts and regulating pipelines, and I am really concerned
1931 that it also might allow oil and gas companies to criminally
1932 prosecute protesters. So I cannot support this bill in its
1933 current form, and I hope the committee will continue to work
1934 on this legislation to improve it before the full committee
1935 markup.

1936 And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

1937 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much. The gentlelady
1938 yields back. Are there any other members wishing to speak on
1939 the bill?

1940 Are there any amendments to the bill?

1941 For what purpose does the gentlelady from New York's
1942 14th district seek recognition?

1943 *Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. To offer an amendment.

1944 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady has an amendment at the
1945 desk, I assume?
1946 *Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Yes. It is OCASNY060.
1947 *Mr. Latta. The clerk will report the amendment.
1948 *The Clerk. Amendment to H.R. 9338 offered by Ms.
1949 Ocasio-Cortez of New York. Strike section 6 --
1950 *Mr. Latta. Without objection, the reading of the
1951 amendment is dispensed with.
1952 [The amendment of Ms. Ocasio-Cortez follows:]
1953
1954 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****
1955

1956 *Mr. Latta. And the gentlelady is recognized for five
1957 minutes in support of her amendment.

1958 *Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1959 When it comes to pipelines across the United States --
1960 and I think the chairman of the full committee noted, as well
1961 -- we want to make sure that we are protecting people's First
1962 Amendment right to protest. Under current law, the current
1963 law is that knowing and willfully damaging or destroying a
1964 pipeline carries up to 20 years in Federal prison. That is
1965 existing in standing law. This bill and the language that
1966 this amendment seeks to strike expands that statute to cover
1967 anyone who "impairs the operation of a pipeline.'" Now, the
1968 issue that we have here in the text is that "impair'" is not
1969 defined. It is a very expansive term that could easily
1970 encompass many different forms of protest, non-violent
1971 protest, and make them Federal felonies.

1972 Many of these projects are highly controversial in the
1973 local communities in which they are often proposed to be
1974 sited. Protest is very common in these kinds of
1975 developments, and we want to make sure that we are, I think,
1976 protecting people's First Amendment ability while, of course,
1977 respecting existing Federal law.

1978 So I hear the chairman on having that flexibility, and I
1979 really appreciate the flexibility in being able to draft
1980 that. I want to make sure that we are being as precise as

1981 possible in what we mean by that, which is why I strike this
1982 amendment to strike section 6. And I urge my colleagues to
1983 support it as we negotiate to the full bill in committee.
1984 Thank you.

1985 *Mr. Latta. Thank you. The gentlelady yields back.
1986 For what purpose does the vice chairman from Texas --

1987 *Mr. Weber. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last
1988 five -- last words.

1989 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five
1990 minutes to speak on the amendment.

1991 *Mr. Weber. Yes, I am going to have to be -- speak
1992 against the amendment because the lady referenced section 6
1993 of the bill. Section 6 of this bill actually ensures that
1994 individuals who knowingly and willfully participate in
1995 activities like these are prosecuted under the full extent of
1996 the law.

1997 Well, what do we mean by that? They don't get to go on
1998 there and shut off all the valves and back up all the
1999 processes in a pipeline because they want to complain. They
2000 want to go there in that land, they want to go in that area,
2001 they want to have signs, they want to do all those things,
2002 they have the right to do that. We don't want to limit that
2003 right. But they can't do things that absolutely shut down
2004 the equipment and thereby introduce damage into that facility
2005 because they are trying to move that product. They have got

2006 to do it on a schedule. And if they can't move that product
2007 on a schedule, then everything will come to a screeching
2008 halt. And these people don't get the right to shut down the
2009 product. They can protest all they want, but there are
2010 penalties for absolutely shutting down the equipment and
2011 producing havoc, if you will, in that chemical plant.

2012 I yield back.

2013 *The Chair. Would the gentleman yield? Would the
2014 gentleman yield?

2015 *Mr. Weber. Yes, sir, I yield.

2016 *The Chair. I agree, that is exactly what we are trying
2017 to deal with. So 20 years of a felon is a big, big sentence,
2018 and so that is what we want to deal with.

2019 I agree that we need to take the word "impair" and
2020 define it better to get to what you want to deal with. I
2021 don't want to support the amendment, but I do want to commit
2022 that, between now and full committee, we will come up with a
2023 -- taking somebody's freedom for 20 years is a big issue, and
2024 we want to make sure the legislative -- somebody doesn't use
2025 this somewhere later, not this Administration, somewhere in
2026 the future -- will they impair because they prevented
2027 somebody from going to work? They impaired because -- and so
2028 we want to make sure we get this right.

2029 So I am not supporting the amendment; I do support that
2030 we need to better define the word "impair."

2031 *Mr. Weber. You said it better than I could, Mr. --
2032 that is why you are the chairman while I am the vice chair.
2033 I yield back.

2034 *The Chair. I yield back, too.

2035 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman yields back the balance of
2036 his time. Is there further discussion on the amendment?

2037 The gentleman from New Jersey, the ranking member of the
2038 full committee, is recognized for five minutes to speak on
2039 the bill -- or on the amendment.

2040 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you. I would urge my colleagues to
2041 support the amendment.

2042 You know, I just want you to understand that there is a
2043 lack of trust with the Department of Justice right now. I
2044 mean, I don't have -- I haven't spent, you know, every day at
2045 the reflecting pool, but, I mean, I think it is a good
2046 example where we have every reason to believe that people
2047 that just protested at the reflecting pool, didn't jump into
2048 the pool, didn't try to destroy the pool, didn't try to stop
2049 the water from flowing in the pool, were arrested. And so
2050 that is the concern here.

2051 In other words, I understand what Chairman Guthrie is
2052 saying, that -- and that, in fact, if someone tries to
2053 destroy the pipeline or shut off the valve, you know, that is
2054 considered an offense. But the fear is that if we don't have
2055 some much more precise language here -- and the gentlewoman

2056 from New York talked about "impair," you know, that could
2057 easily be interpreted by the Justice Department to say, oh,
2058 you are close to the pipeline and I don't like the way you
2059 look, and therefore I am going to arrest you.

2060 So I do think we should support this amendment, but, you
2061 know, even if it doesn't pass, let's work on this to make
2062 this clearer because this -- a lack of distrust, in my
2063 opinion, on our side as to what DoJ might do with this
2064 language that is in the bill.

2065 So did you want me to yield to the -- oh, to Mr.
2066 Auchincloss, yes, the gentleman from Massachusetts.

2067 *Mr. Auchincloss. Thank you. I am going to support the
2068 amendment. I think the language is too wide, the trust in
2069 the Administration is too low.

2070 Question, because I -- we all want to protect speech and
2071 protests. I agree with the vice chairman. You can't go in
2072 there and impair the operation, you can't turn off the
2073 valves, you can't damage the production. Question for the
2074 vice chairman: There already are laws against damage and
2075 destruction, there is already laws against trespass is my
2076 understanding, as well. Wouldn't someone who is going in
2077 there and physically contacting the pipeline, wouldn't that
2078 be trespass under current law?

2079 And I yield.

2080 *Mr. Weber. In that -- what you are laying out, I would

2081 say yes. But there is also another -- I think what we ought
2082 to do is -- and I was talking about this with some of my
2083 colleagues -- people can go and protest at the schoolhouse,
2084 but they don't have the right to block the doors and prevent
2085 people from getting in, kids and students from getting in.
2086 So there are certain possibilities here that -- they can be
2087 there. That doesn't mean that they have the right to turn
2088 off the valve, as you pointed out. But they still have the
2089 right to be there and protest. This bill in no way limits
2090 that whatsoever.

2091 *Mr. Auchincloss. I think what I am asking, though, is
2092 why is that language necessary? Because we have trespass, we
2093 have damage, destruction. Can't do it.

2094 I would also presume that, like, you can't physically
2095 prevent workers from accessing the work site in a way that is
2096 harassment, as well. Like, what is the lacuna? What is the
2097 gap here that we are trying to cover with this new language?

2098 *Mr. Weber. Well, look, the goal of this section is
2099 clear. We recognize that there are still bipartisan
2100 negotiations going on to make sure we get the language right,
2101 and we ensure that there are not unintended consequences
2102 impacting people's right to protest under the First
2103 Amendment. But I think the amendment is not necessarily
2104 called for. We can continue to work on this, as the chairman
2105 said. For that reason I am going to be -- you know, ask our

2106 colleagues to vote against the amendment.

2107 I yield back.

2108 *Mr. Auchincloss. Okay. I will yield back to the
2109 ranking member, I think, is now -- who has the time.

2110 *Mr. Pallone. Is anyone would -- would you take -- I
2111 yield to the gentleman from Texas.

2112 *Mr. Veasey. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I did
2113 want to ask Chairman Guthrie, you know, one of the areas that
2114 I think that people have concerned with in this country is
2115 lack of legislative oversight. And I believe the chairman
2116 when he says that he would not want anyone to be arrested for
2117 exercising their First Amendment rights. And I was just
2118 wondering from him if the Administration did cross those
2119 boundaries where they did arrest someone for just exercising
2120 their First Amendment rights like the Judge Judy lady who is
2121 in charge here now. Would you work with -- would the
2122 committee be willing to say it was not our intent when we
2123 passed this legislation for people to be arrested just for
2124 exercising their First Amendment rights?

2125 *The Chair. I am sorry, I didn't -- I don't want you to
2126 have to repeat all that, but I didn't quite follow what you
2127 are asking.

2128 So what you are saying is that --

2129 *Mr. Veasey. I am saying that if the Administration
2130 decided that they did want to arrest someone just for

2131 exercising their First Amendment rights, would the committee
2132 be willing to say that it was not our intent, we
2133 intentionally did not want someone to be arrested just for
2134 doing that?

2135 I don't want the Judge Judy lady to think that, hey --
2136 or Jeanie, whatever her name is -- to think that she can
2137 enforce that and then this committee not say anything.

2138 *The Chair. Well, so I don't want anybody arrested for
2139 the -- I think anybody on our side of the aisle doesn't want
2140 to see anybody arrested for exercising their First Amendment
2141 rights.

2142 And so what I was agreeing with my friend from New York
2143 is that -- can some future administration, this
2144 Administration, any -- use the word "impair" and say, well
2145 -- and broaden it out?

2146 And so to get to our friend from Massachusetts, so you
2147 can trespass and be arrested for trespassing. But if you
2148 turn a valve -- let's say it builds pressure up and it
2149 damages somewhat later -- that is what we are trying to get
2150 at, to be clear.

2151 And so in order to ensure that somebody doesn't -- I
2152 guess any administration, and I can point to some in the
2153 previous administrations that say, well, that really isn't
2154 enforcing the law the way we intended it for it to be. The
2155 best way to do the law as intended is to define it as best as

2156 we can.

2157 And so I am open between now and full committee to make
2158 sure we take the word "impair" and define it as closely as
2159 we can to what we want the Justice Department to do. That is
2160 our job. And so, yes, I am willing to say I don't want
2161 anybody arrested for the First Amendment, but just purely
2162 violating -- I don't want somebody arrested just purely
2163 exercising a peaceful protest, but we want to make sure we
2164 have this protection in place too.

2165 And so we will continue to work -- it is good that you
2166 pointed out the word "impair." We look out and say, all
2167 right, maybe there -- that may be broad. Can some future
2168 administration -- you say this one -- I argue maybe a future
2169 could use that term that is broad, and we want to make it
2170 more precise, and I think that is fair. That is a fair
2171 request from your side.

2172 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman -- the ranking member from
2173 New Jersey's time has expired. Are there other members
2174 wishing to be recognized on the amendment?

2175 Hearing none -- oh, I am sorry.

2176 *The Chair. So I --

2177 *Mr. Latta. Oh, I am sorry.

2178 *The Chair. I know I have already been recognized.
2179 Could I --

2180 *Mr. Latta. Well, I --

2181 *The Chair. I was just wondering if we could withdraw
2182 the amendment and work together. That is what I -- and I
2183 would commit before we come to full committee we will do -- I
2184 can't commit to the outcome, but I can absolutely commit to
2185 an honest negotiation to try to get to the proper outcome
2186 because I agree that the word "impair" could be interpreted
2187 as broad.

2188 I mean, I agree the word "impair" could be interpreted
2189 -- we want to get to the right outcome.

2190 *Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Yes --

2191 *Mr. Latta. For what purpose does the gentlelady from
2192 New York -- okay, I am sorry.

2193 *Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. May I?

2194 *The Chair. Yield to you? Yes, I will yield.

2195 *Ms. Ocasio-Cortez. Okay, thank you. Sorry, I am out
2196 of my own time.

2197 I appreciate the chairman being willing to work together
2198 on this, and in that spirit of refining that language and
2199 ensuring that we are protecting those folks who want to make
2200 sure that they are expressing themselves, in the spirit of
2201 that negotiation I am happy to withdraw the amendment as we
2202 work forward to full committee.

2203 *The Chair. Thank you. That is fair, and we will be
2204 committed to working together. Thank you.

2205 All right, I yield back.

2206 *Mr. Latta. The gentlelady has withdrawn --

2207 *Mr. Weber. Mr. Chairman?

2208 *Mr. Latta. I am sorry?

2209 *Mr. Weber. I move to strike the last words.

2210 *Mr. Latta. For what purpose does the gentleman from

2211 Texas, the vice chair, seek recognition?

2212 *Mr. Weber. I move to strike the last words.

2213 *Mr. Latta. The gentleman is recognized for five

2214 minutes to strike the last word.

2215 *Mr. Weber. Thank you, Alexandria.

2216 I yield back.

2217 [Laughter.]

2218 *Mr. Latta. Okay. Are there any further amendments on

2219 the bill?

2220 Hearing none, the question now occurs on adopting H.R.

2221 9338.

2222 All those in favor will signify by saying aye.

2223 All those opposed, nay.

2224 The ayes have it and the bill is adopted and forwarded

2225 to the full Committee.

2226 Without objection, staff is authorized to make technical

2227 and conforming changes to the legislation approved by the

2228 Committee today.

2229 So ordered.

2230 And without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

2231 [Whereupon, at 3:54 p.m., the subcommittee was
2232 adjourned.]