

Opening Statement of the Honorable John Shimkus
Subcommittee on Environment
Markup on H.R. 806, H.R. ____, Brownfields Enhancement,
Economic Redevelopment, and Reauthorization Act of 2017,
and H.R.____, Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning and welcome to today's Subcommittee markup. Today, we will markup three pieces of legislation—from the foundations of the Subcommittee's jurisdiction.

I noted at our first hearing this year in February that one of the guiding themes of our legislative work this Congress would be to identify the best ways to modernize the statutes within our jurisdiction. The first goal in this work was to implement practical, statutory updates that will accelerate infrastructure and manufacturing development, which supports our Congressional agenda. Each piece of legislation we will consider this morning will advance that agenda.

We will first consider the Brownfields Enhancement and Environmental Redevelopment and Reauthorization Act of 2017. Cleaning up contaminated sites is a priority for the Administration and the Brownfields Program is great for the economy because grants can be directly leveraged into jobs, additional redevelopment funds, and increased residential and commercial property values. Brownfields funding and cleanup is also critically important to promoting investment in new infrastructure and to better utilizing our existing infrastructure. Despite the importance of the Brownfields Program, it has not been authorized since 2006 and the bill we are considering today reauthorizes the program and makes several needed improvements to the brownfields law that will result in more sites being cleaned up. This broadly bipartisan bill will further the goal of promoting infrastructure development and will result in direct economic benefits to all of our districts and I hope my colleagues will support this legislation.

We will next consider the Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2017. Nuclear waste management policy is not a partisan issue and there is an urgent need for Congress to address this challenge as taxpayer liability continues to skyrocket due to the Federal government's unfulfilled obligations. This Committee has received testimony from scores of expert witnesses about challenges associated with managing spent nuclear fuel. The bill before us today is a direct result of our extensive hearing record.

The bill amends the Nuclear Waste Policy Act to make key reforms to our nation's nuclear waste management policy. These include assuring the pending consideration of the Yucca Mountain repository license can be successfully completed, providing for a partnership with the State of Nevada to benefit as the host state, authorizing an interim storage program, providing continuity in DOE's program management, and fixing the system that funds the disposal program.

We will also call up H.R. 806, the Ozone Standards Implementation Act of 2017. The bill extends the ozone standard implementation schedule and air quality standard-setting timelines to reduce unnecessary burdens on states and localities.

The bill particularly supports our nation's infrastructure and manufacturing agenda, because it aligns air quality permitting for new sources with the extended ozone implementation schedule. This means manufacturing facilities—which will continue be required to install the best available emissions controls—can more quickly proceed to new construction or expansion, which will put our economic growth on a faster track.

These bills deserve wide and bi-partisan support.