Opening Statement of John Shimkus
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
"Lessons from Across the Nation:
State and Local Action to Combat Climate Change"
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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome Governor Inslee.

There's no question, ever since your time on the Committee, that you have been a vocal and passionate advocate for federal policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Some of your policy ideas may not be supportable by our side of the aisle. The proposals may not even be supportable in your home state, but you have thought a lot about climate policy, we have worked well together in the past, and so I look forward to your testimony this morning.

Mr. Chairman, when we began the Subcommittee's climate hearings at the beginning of February, I made a point that, just because you agree climate change is a risk to address, does not mean that you must accept unquestionably the standard Democrat and climate activist solutions to the problem.

For too long this has been a false choice in the policy debate, where if Members question the cost and effectiveness of solutions, they are portrayed as not being serious about the problem. I would suggest, if you are serious about the problem, you should examine the costs and effectiveness of proposed policies.

For nearly 30 years, the standard treaties and international requirements have not worked so well. In 1990, energy-related carbon dioxide emissions were 20.5 gigatons. By 2018, energy-related CO2 emissions had increased to 33.2 gigatons, or by 62%, according to the most recent report form the International Energy Agency.

Between 2017 to 2018 alone, global emissions of carbon dioxide increased by 560 million metric tons—a half gigaton. China's emissions increased by 230 million metric tons, or a little more than 40% of the worldwide increase.

U.S. energy emissions also tracked up, but as the IEA notes: "Despite this increase, emissions in the United States remain around their 1990 levels [which is] 14% and 800 million tons of CO2 below their peak in 2000. This is the largest absolute decline among all countries since 2000."

The United Nation's own November 2018 Emissions Gap Report states that nations will still have to triple their efforts to meet the Paris Agreement's basic goals. Yet given the reaction to even modest targets in Europe and elsewhere and the realities of future fossil energy demand, this is not a realistic prospect.

The point here is the scale of the global energy and industrial growth should put the effectiveness of our U.S. actions in perspective.

The focus on the Obama Administration's economy-wide emissions commitments does not appear to be a realistic solution to global emissions growth. Though enforcing the commitments here at home could create realistic hardship on our electricity, transportation, and industrial sectors in communities around the nation.

We will hear today what states and cities associated with the "we are still in" coalition are doing to reduce emissions and take other actions to address climate change. I look forward to what we can learn, especially about preparing for future climate impacts.

But I think we should pay close attention to the testimony of two of the elected officials we will hear from this morning: Mayor Jerry Morales, of Midland, Texas and Commissioner Daniel Camp, who chairs the Board of County Commissioners in Beaver County, Pennsylvania—over the border from Mr. Johnson and Mr. McKinley's districts in the upper Ohio River Valley.

They provide powerful examples of what our oil and gas revolution in the United States has meant to communities, in terms of jobs, tax base, quality of life, economic potential and community and environmental health. These officials can testify as to what a focus on energy access, affordable energy, and embracing technological development can mean for the economic vitality of communities.

Their experience is the experience developing nations around the world are striving for and which the U.S. should promote. The community wealth and security, the high-quality jobs and manufacturing prospects, the economic ability to strengthen infrastructure and protect communities from natural disasters are benefits that we should not abandon in search of climate solutions.

Instead, these are essential attributes we should embrace as providing the potential for continued innovation that will actually foster the technologies necessary to reduce global emissions.

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